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THE EXPRESSION OF THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS
THOUGHTS OF BENJAMIN DISRAELI IN THE CONINGSBY TRILOGY

by

JOHN F. ROSS

A THESIS

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PREFACE

This thesis is not intended to be a closely attentive 'literary' study; it studies neither form nor style, however unique Disraeli's are. In any case it could be argued that the distinctive features of his style are deficiencies, detracting from the literary value of the novels and giving them little more than a unique quaintness. The novels are studied here with an eye on their prime significance, the thoughts which they embody. Though much of the secondary matter of the novels, such as Disraeli's views on the Jews, and on the niceties of social life, reflects Disraeli's own idiosyncrasies, it is not as important for an understanding of what Disraeli is trying to do; while a study of the imagery of the novels or of Disraeli's idiosyncrasies may have its intellectual rewards, there are limits to what can be done in a short space. Limitations of time and space are also evident in the attempt started here to place Disraeli and his work in their proper context; the fuller study of Disraeli which I hope to do in the future will entail extensive reading in those authors who affected his generation and himself. To place

Disraeli securely in his context would necessitate a reading not only of all of Southey, Bolingbroke, Carlyle, and of such seminal "Young England" books as Kenelm Digby's The Broad Stone of Honour (which was the source of Young England's medievalism) and Lord John Manners's The Monastic and Manufacturing Systems, but also of Disraeli's youthful reading, primarily in Cicero, and of the writings of contemporary novelists such as Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Kingsley.

The thesis does attempt to understand the trilogy. It is a study of what Disraeli has to say with relevance to politics, society, and religion, and how he presents what he has to say on those subjects in Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred. After a short introduction which puts Disraeli into a broad historical and philosophical context, each of the novels of the trilogy is studied in turn. Finally, an attempt is made to briefly synthesize the content of the three novels, and to briefly locate them in a significant literary context and in the historical context of Disraeli's own life. In short, the thesis is an attempt at interpretation and location.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CONINGSBY, SYBIL and TANCRED form a real Trilogy; that is to say, they treat of the same subject, and endeavour to complete that treatment. The origin and character of our political parties, their influence on the condition of the people of this country, some picture of the moral and physical condition of that people, and some intimation of the means by which it might be elevated and improved, were themes which had long engaged my meditation.¹

This is what Disraeli himself, writing his general introduction to his works in 1870, said about the three novels to be studied in this thesis. Inasmuch as one can separate politics from sociology, and both from ethics, Coningsby is concerned with politics, Sybil attempts to provide an account of the influence of politics on the condition of England and to present "some picture of the moral and physical condition of that people", and Tancred tries to intimate the origins of the means by which the moral and physical condition of the English people can be improved and elevated. However, in order to understand the three books, it helps to describe briefly both the historical context in which Disraeli was writing and the sources and content of Disraeli's approach to politics, social questions, and ethics.

At the beginning of the century, politics were of little interest to the vast majority of the people of England, for the quarrels which divided Parliament were not directly relevant to their condition. Both parties were controlled to a large extent by the aristocracy -- with the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 Tory aristocrats lost about two

hundred "nomination" seats and Whig aristocrats lost about fifty -- and the House of Commons was more of a gentleman's club than a popular assembly. This is not to say that there were no differences between the Whigs and the Tories; there were differences, but these were based more on traditions handed down from the Revolution Settlement of 1688 and from the long period of Whig supremacy since 1714 than on the contemporary social condition. Possibly the most significant difference was that the Whigs tended to think in terms of general ideas and the Tories were more concerned with particularities, and when the influences of Bentham, Burke and Coleridge came to be felt this distinction was to some extent reversed. Even now, the liberals in British politics tend to think of particularities, while the more extreme left and right think in terms of general principles and their thinking is more affected by their respective ideologies. The other main difference between the parties lay in the attitudes of the landowners and the capitalists; the landowners tended for the most part to support the Tories and the capitalists to side with the Whigs, but this division between land and trade was not as important in 1800 as it became later.

By 1832, the year of the first Reform Bill, the political scene had changed. The Whigs had become increasingly popular with the nation at large, and for two reasons. One was their view "that concession to a sustained popular demand was the wisest policy for a governing aristocracy",² and the other reason was the hope of the mass of the people that the Whigs would alleviate their social distress.

Until 1830 the popularity of the Whigs had slowly and steadily gathered force. . . . The Duke of Wellington, the chief of the Tory party, and since Waterloo the best loved man in England, had

seen the London mob hurl stones at his house. . . .In London and Birmingham the tricolour flag had been unfurled. In the country the farm-labourers had set fire to the threshing-mills of the squires. Ten thousand workmen had besieged St. James's Palace. The English bishops who had voted against Reform in the House of Lords were booed in the streets and did not dare to show themselves again. Little Lord John Russell, leader of the Reform party of the Whigs, was the idol of the people.³

All those who were discontented with the status quo hoped that the Reform Bill would work almost as a panacea, that it would purify Parliament by removing much of its dead wood, and that it would bring the House of Commons into much closer rapport with the general public. A new polarization was expected in politics, with the Tories on one side and the reformers on the other. The Tories were now beginning to call themselves Conservatives, and their purpose according to Sir Robert Peel in 1833 would be to conserve the new status quo. "I presume the chief object of that party which is called Conservative. . .will be to resist Radicalism, to prevent those further encroachments of democratic influence which will be attempted. . . ."4 Such a policy could develop in only two ways; into blind reaction, or into a policy of concession to the threat of revolution. Lord Liverpool⁵ adopted the former course, the majority of Conservatives adopted the latter, and while such a concessionary policy had operated in favour of the Whigs in the earlier situation, it was no longer sufficient, for the dissident forces of society had smelled blood in 1832 and to win power a party now had to present a positive alternative to the ruling party -- opposition was not enough.

The political dichotomy recognized by Peel was not that of 1800; Peel saw politics as a choice between Conservatism and Radicalism, between Bentham and his disciples on one hand, and Burke, Coleridge, Southey on the

other. This is not to say that Bentham's influence extended only to those members of the House of Commons who called themselves Radicals: all the Radicals were not utilitarians, and Peel himself had been influenced to a certain extent by Bentham.

Bentham's ideas and suggestions affected many of the ablest men of the younger generation, without distinction of party. Peel, Brougham, and Francis Place learned much from him; the reform of the penal code by the Tories, the reform of the poor law by the Whigs were measures which Bentham had supported.⁶

Bentham's influence was both personal and philosophical. He set an example to the youth of England by being the "great subversive" which Mill calls him: "Who, before Bentham, (whatever controversies might exist on points of detail,) dared to speak disrespectfully, in express terms, of the British Constitution or the English Law?"⁷ Philosophically his influence stemmed from his ethical system of Philosophical Hedonism, and his Hedonistic Calculus. The main contention of Philosophical Hedonism, which involved a relativistic approach to ethics, was that the good was that which tended to create the greatest happiness of the greatest number; in order to calculate this desirable end, he took into account the intensity of the pleasure given or received, its temporal duration, the amount to which it was dispersed among the people, and so on. John Stuart Mill saw the objections to this theory; that moral considerations called for a qualitative standard by which to measure Bentham's quantitative standard, and neither standard was truly objective; that Philosophical Hedonism was at worst erroneous, and at best a not very meaningful tautology. Nonetheless, Bentham's philosophy had a great influence in English political theory after it had been synthesized with the ideas of the Political

Economists, who thought that their laws of political economy were laws of nature and therefore unavoidable.

The Political Economists, David Ricardo and his orthodox followers, were not a product of Bentham's influence: both Bentham and Ricardo started on the basis of Hume, but their developments were separate, only to unite in the minds of the proponents of laissez-faire. Ricardo attempted in his Principles of Political Economy (1817) to set forth the laws of political economy, which he looked upon as natural laws, being good for all time in all places, and having no relation to any specific historical context. Capitalist society was regarded as the apex of human organization, and Ricardo did not see that capitalism itself might be superseded as it had superseded the feudal system. Furthermore, Ricardo accepted the labour theory of value, and thereby implied that class war was inevitable. In theory, these natural laws operated inexorably, but in practice the political economists in parliament and outside it worked for political reforms which would facilitate their acceptance, and the acceptance of laissez-faire by government and people. The insistence of Ricardo and his followers that political economy was an exact science (combined with the pressure of evangelical humanitarianism) led to many fact-finding commissions: these commissions brought awareness to all of the issues known as "the condition-of-England question". The publications of such commissions provided material for Disraeli's and Engels's indictments of capitalist society, and taught Englishmen about their compatriots. At the same time, the conservatives and the romantics attacked the political economists inasmuch as they tended to think everything which mattered was

reducible to statistics, complaining that the utilitarians and the other radicals ignored the values of tradition and of the imagination. They nevertheless deserve credit for inspiring the commissions which found the facts for those who needed to know them.

An immediate result of these commissions was that many Englishmen were beginning to realise that Plato's statement in the Republic could be applied with equal justice to England: "Any city, however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich."⁸ This division was not merely an abstract classification if one accepted in any way the labour theory of value; it implied not only the existence of economic classes, but also class warfare.

Carlyle in Sartor Resartus, Chartism and Past and Present gave ominous warning of its potentiality, and Engels documented its existence, writing in 1844: "In this country, social war is under full headway, everyone stands for himself, and fights for himself against all comers, . . .".⁹ In 1839 Carlyle, in a tradition continuous since the 1790's, had likened the social unrest in England to that preceding the French Revolution. There was good reason to be afraid. The way of life of the working classes was abysmal, with few exceptions their employers oppressed and exploited them, and the law was interpreted against them. Wages were low, hours of work were long, and organizations of the workers were repressed; the results were bitter class-hatred, continued agitation, the organization of unions as secret societies, and the vast support given to the Chartist leaders.

In 1830 the starving field labourers of the southern counties of England struck for wages of 2/6aday; the strike was crushed after the

strikers had rioted, and three of the leaders were hanged, while many others were transported to Australia.¹⁰ In the 1840's the boys working on the cleaning-rakes in the lead mines of Teesdale sang Thomas Raine's song and dreamed of the coming millenium when their wages would rise to ninepence a day. In 1844, the striking miners in Lord Londonderry's collieries in Durham gave added point to the old chorus "Down, Down, Down Derry, Down" and sang of the Devil turning the poor folk out of Hell to "make room for the rich wicked race". In the towns and the mines the men struck and rioted; in the country the agricultural labourers turned to incendiarism. Low wages were not the sole cause of unrest; there were also the tommy-shops, (Engels corroborates Disraeli's exposure of these in Sybil)¹¹ by which, in effect, men were paid wages in goods instead of in the coin of the realm, the poor housing of the lower classes compared to the standard of housing of the rest of society, and the fact that the "operatives" led lives which were more nasty, brutish, and short than anyone else's, because of their poor housing, poor food, and conditions of work. Engels saw that a working man was too old at 45¹², and in 1840 the average life expectancy of the operatives was only 15 years.¹³ This, of course, is the life expectancy at birth, but nonetheless an operative who survived birth and laudanum did age prematurely, and did not live to any advanced age.

The introduction of machinery without any accompanying social planning resulted in dislocation of men and widespread unemployment in some trades. In the eighteenth century the Kincardineshire weavers had sung of the "Work of the Weavers", secure in the knowledge that everyone needed their product:

The weaving is a trade that never can fail,
 As lang's we need ae cloot tae keep anither hale,
 So let us aye be merry ow'r a buicker o' guid ale,
 And drink tae the wark o' the weavers.

Less than a hundred years later, the hand-loom weavers were in dire poverty, for although society still needed "ae cloot tae keep anither hale", the cloth was machine-woven.

For those who were unemployed, the choice was to starve to death or to enter the work-houses set up by the new Poor Law of the Whigs and the "enlightened" Radicals. For those who were employed, their choice lay between unemployment and submission to very hard conditions of work under oppression by their employers. Their degradation was moral as well as physical: as Engels observed:

It is, besides, a matter of course that factory servitude, like any other, and to an even higher degree, confers the ius primae noctis upon the master. In this respect also the employer is sovereign over the persons and charms of his employees. The threat of discharge suffices to overcome all resistance in nine cases out of ten, if not in ninety-nine out of a hundred, in girls who, in any case, have no strong inducements to chastity.¹⁴

In 1843 the Times had pointed out the proximity of wealth and squalor in London:

But let all men remember this -- that within the most courtly precincts of the richest city of God's earth, there may be found, night after night, winter after winter, women - young in years - old in sin and suffering - outcasts from society - ROTTING FROM FAMINE, FILTH, AND DISEASE. Let them remember this, and learn not to theorise but to act. God knows, there is much room for action nowadays.¹⁵

It was indeed "Hard times for the poor."¹⁶

On the other hand, the Industrial Revolution had not only brought a new class into being with the emergence of the captains of industry, but it had also lined the pockets of the landowners. The factories needed

coal, iron, and water power, and the new system of communications which was needed, the railways, also needed coal and iron; and the coal, iron, and water needed were owned by the landowners, who also owned the land over which the railways were to run. There were fifty-four Railway Acts between 1825 and 1835, thirty-nine more in 1836-37, and a second boom in 1844-47: by 1848 there were over five thousand miles of railways in Britain, and of this less than four hundred miles were in Ireland. Railway speculation was the rage of the moment, and fortunes were made; fortunes were lost spectacularly when speculators made mistakes like Lady Bertie in Tancred,¹⁷ but the overall result was that landowners made money in compensation awards, railway owners made money by operating the railways, and industry prospered, by means of railways at home and world-wide shipping.

The division between the rich and the poor was too obvious to ignore. Practical self-interested concern stimulated by cholera led to government surveys of industrial living conditions; evangelical zeal on the part of such reformers as Shaftesbury forced investigation of working conditions in the mines and factories; and the shock produced by the unwelcome revelations was popularly magnified a thousand-fold by the sardonic invective of Carlyle who gave the age its terminology: "the condition of England", "the dismal science", "mammonism", "cash nexus", "captains of industry". Offensive to everyone, Carlyle, nevertheless, influenced men of all parties, among them Disraeli, whose trilogy is full of his vision if not as profound. Disraeli, however, approached the scene not from Carlyle's specie aeternitatis but from the narrower base of conserv-

ative idealism. Not satisfied with knowing and popularizing the condition of England, Disraeli wanted to improve it; but how could he engage the sympathy of the workers? 'Young England', the 'Manchester School' and the Whigs offered themselves to the working classes, and were rejected.

The 'Young England' party offered them the landed aristocracy, transformed and idealized; to the working class the landed aristocracy, unidealized and untransformed, was the oldest and most conspicuous branch of their oppressors. The free traders of the Manchester school also suggested themselves as leaders; to the working class they represented the hated factory system. As for the Whigs, they were, after 1832, responsible for the new poor law.¹⁸

The proletariat preferred chartism,¹⁹ and to fight for themselves. The Charter itself had a political purpose, and like all political movements chartism reflected social unrest, as Carlyle said: "Chartism means the bitter discontent grown fierce and mad, the wrong condition therefore the wrong disposition, of the working classes of England. It is a new name for a thing which has had many names, which will yet have many."²⁰ But Carlyle, though he recognized that chartism was an expression by the working class of its desire for better things with historical antecedents which went back as far as the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 thought that at bottom its object was, or ought to be, to secure guidance and government for the working man; sceptical of its intelligence and fearful of its power, he did not approve of the British labour movement as a movement towards self-government, or its most abiding slogan as anything like "of the people, by the people, for the people."²¹ Chartism had a lot of support, and in the north of England aroused a lot of revolutionary fervour; the Chartist Convention of 1839 split over the question of what was to be done if Parliament rejected the monster petition in support of the

Charter.

Lovett and his southern followers urged a further campaign of peaceful agitation and popular education: O'Connor and his northern supporters urged violent reprisals... . There was a tang of civil war in the air. The movement divided into moral force and physical force chartism, the latter resulting in ominous riots.²²

Something was obviously wrong with society. In Sybil Disraeli attempted to show the reasons for working class discontent and to suggest a method of reconciling the landed interest and the proletariat.

With politics and society in a state of flux, the Church of England which had always been closely connected with the State was also undergoing some changes. There had not been many men like Parson Adams in the Church in the eighteenth century, and by the nineteenth century the Church was in a sorry state. It had lost contact with the people of the new cities, who went to the dissenting Chapel if they went anywhere to worship God. In Sybil, Ambrose St. Lys went among the people to preach the Unknown God;²³ this was no exaggeration on Disraeli's part. A considerable proportion of the lower classes was ignorant of Christianity and even among England's rulers, according to J. A. Froude, "the gospel of political economy had been substituted for the gospel of Christ."²⁴ Engels quotes from the report of Commissioner Home of the Children's Employment commission some unorthodox answers given to the question "Who was Christ?" which remind the reader of Sue in Wodgate in Sybil, and Jo at the inquest in Bleak House: "'He was Adam', 'He was an Apostle,' 'He was the Saviour's Lord's Son', and from a youth of sixteen: 'He was a king of London long ago'."²⁵ Carlyle comments on this forgetting of Christianity in a manner which resembles that of Bishop Wulfstan in his famous homily Sermo Lupi ad Anglos:

But indeed decay of loyalty in all senses, disobedience, decay of religious faith, has long been noticeable and lamentable in this largest class, as in other smaller ones. Revolt, sullen revengeful humour of revolt against the upper classes, decreasing respect for what their temporal superiors command, decreasing faith for what their spiritual superiors teach, is more and more the universal spirit of the lower classes.²⁶

Such a lack of faith among the proletariat, and the general scepticism of the enlightenment of the eighteenth century were sufficient to cause concern to Christians: one effect was the rise of the evangelical movement which emphasized the importance of faith to the individual; but when the State seemed to have no regard for the Church, when the Reform Ministry of Lord Grey suppressed ten Irish bishoprics in 1833 in defiance of the opinion of the Church of England, churchmen became afraid that the political establishment was coming to regard the Church as just one other branch of the State, afraid that the Archbishop of Canterbury might become a civil servant, at best a Secretary of State for Divine Affairs. In 1815 the Church had "at least the external support of almost the whole of the upper class"²⁷ but by 1833 churchmen were reminding themselves of the tradition of unorthodoxy in the Whig leadership, they were becoming worried about possible "National Apostasy" and they were beginning to think of the place of the Church in the life of society as well as in the individual life. The most striking result of Lord Grey's action in 1833 was John Keble's assize sermon "National Apostasy" preached in the pulpit of Oxford University on 14 July 1833; this sermon marks the start of the Oxford Movement with its effort to revive the authority of the Church: self-interest had impelled churchmen to enter politics. They derived the religious authority of the Church from the doctrine of

apostolic succession²⁸ and their conception of the political role of the church they derived from mainstream conservatism; at the same time the resurgent interest in history, and especially in the Middle Ages, a part of the romantic reaction led to an increasing use of ritual. This led to suggestions of Romanism from their opponents, and these suggestions seemed confirmed when Newman in his search for authority eventually joined the Church of Rome in 1845, but as yet the movement was within the Church of England. The movement began as a reaction to a Whig policy, so the conservatives and the Oxford reformers found themselves allies and this alliance was strengthened by the fact that the Reformers ideas of what the Church should be fitted in well with the ideas of the Tories, traditionally staunchly Anglican. Disraeli tries in Tancred to inspire his readers with the idea, shared by him with the Tractorians, that the Church is a sacred corporation, deriving authority from God and Christ and not from any legislative acts of a temporal monarch. Such a Church, of course, is nearer to the Jewish priesthood and the Catholic Church than it is to the Whig idea of the Church of England as a state church.

All along Disraeli could adopt the persona of the neutral observer: he had no traditional family politics, he had himself stood as a Radical candidate, he was not a member of the three great classes in society, being neither a landowner (in the forties), a factory owner, nor a member of the working class, and his family religion was not Christian; it was therefore easy for him to adopt a persona of impartiality in order to present his partiality.

Ideologically, he was a child of romanticism; his politics came from Bolingbroke, Burke, Coleridge and Southey, his social ideas came

from his reading of Carlyle and what he had seen on his tour of the north in 1844, with Kenelm Digby's writings in the background, and his religious views, though influenced by his milieu and the ideas current in that milieu were to a large extent his own, coloured by the faith of his ancestors.

Politically Disraeli was convinced that there should be an ideology behind the Conservative party, and for that ideology he went back to Bolingbroke's Patriot King. He and the rest of Young England relied a lot on Robert Southey's Sir Thomas More. These two writers acted in conjunction with the mainstream of conservative thought found in the works of men such as Burke and Coleridge. Coleridge did not have an appreciable direct effect on Disraeli, though no doubt inasmuch as his influence pervaded conservatism, it must have had some influence; while the influence of Burke and Southey are noticeable, as far as Disraeli was concerned the arch-priest of Toryism was Bolingbroke, and in a glowing statement of faith in the resurgence of "real" toryism in Sybil he ascribes the glory of its maintenance to St. John.

Even now [toryism] is not dead, but sleepeth; and, in an age of political materialism, of confused purposes and perplexed intelligence, that aspires only to wealth because it has faith in no other accomplishment, as men rifle cargoes on the verge of shipwreck, toryism will yet rise from the tomb over which Bolingbroke shed his last tear, to bring back strength to the Crown, liberty to the Subject, and to announce that power has only one duty: to secure the social welfare of the PEOPLE.²⁹

Bolingbroke's ideas remind one of the Renaissance Platonists' theory of the "Great Chain of Being"; he thought of the perfect state as patriarchal in essence. "The true image of a free people, governed by a PATRIOT KING, is that of a patriarchal family, where the head and all the members are

united by one common interest, and animated by one common spirit."³⁰ Furthermore, Bolingbroke thought "the ultimate end of all governments is the good of the people, for whose sake they were made."³¹ G. D. H. Cole was right when he said that Sybil and The Patriot King are "eighteenth- and nineteenth-century variations on a common theme."³² He could have included Coningsby also; Disraeli had no patriot king to venerate, but after a depressing series of Georges, like many another Victorian he had great hopes for the young Queen; nor could he regard the state as a family, but his main criticism of contemporary society was that it did in no way approximate to his ideal, the ideal of Menenius Agrippa, Coleridge, and Bolingbroke, the idea of the organic state. In this organic state, the principles of the Tory party should be, in Burke's words, ones of unyielding allegiance to "our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars";³³ national loyalty, individual freedom, the traditions handed down from past generations, and Christian faith. In the ideal commonwealth of Burke: "Whatever each man can do separately, without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favour."³⁴ Burke and Bolingbroke give Disraeli a political ideal, and Burke gives him tactical advice as well: "Our patience will achieve more than our force."³⁵ Southey had already synthesized Tory thinking, and added to it romantic medievalism; while Disraeli does not give credit for his ideas to Southey, George Smythe called him "the real founder of the movement".³⁶ Southey was more concerned with society than politics, inasmuch as they can be separated, but

he strengthened the union between toryism and the reactionary wing of romanticism, and though far from Shelley's radicalism, equally visionary and equally impracticable.

The sum total of Tory thinking inclined towards an idea of the Tory party as a national party, representing the interests of the whole nation, and towards an imaginative approach to politics; Burke denied that the constitution of a kingdom could ever be a problem in arithmetic³⁷, and Coleridge³⁸, Southey³⁹, and Disraeli⁴⁰ had no love for the radical statisticians. The Whigs, the "Venetian Party", could not become a national party, for they were in essence oligarchical; Disraeli rejected the Radicals for they were utilitarians and political economists. When he himself stood as a radical, he said he was "a Conservative to preserve all that is good in our constitution, a Radical to remove all that is bad."⁴¹ It was a short step from this to his synthesis of earlier Tory philosophy and giving it the name of democratic Toryism or Tory Radicalism, and this he did three years after the Wycombe election when he stood for Taunton in 1835. Monypenny quotes the report by the Dorset County Chronicle for 4 June 1835 of his speech after his defeat.

He had told them once before that the Conservative Party was the really democratic party in the country who surrounded the people with the power of the throne to shield them from the undue power of the aristocracy. . . .The question was between an hereditary monarchy on one side and an elective executive on the other. . . .He was in favour of an hereditary monarchy because a King whose power and authority were so judiciously limited as those of the King of England was in effect the great leader of the people against an usurping aristocracy.⁴²

This is the first and basic statement of the aims of Tory Radicalism, and in the trilogy he enlarges on, but does not change it.

In his approach to society he accepted Carlyle's analysis, the stratification of society's classes, and attempted in Sybil to express this division, and to suggest a method of ending it. Carlyle had recognized three classes, the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, and the landowners; Disraeli differentiated between good, democratic Tories and bad old-fashioned rulers, not into landowners and bourgeoisie. In Sybil he is most concerned with the condition of society in general and of the working class in particular.

The description of the conditions of life in Sybil are corroborated by Engels's Condition of the Working Classes. Though the similarity is no doubt partly occasioned by both Engels and Disraeli having read the same reports, they had both seen at first hand what conditions were like in the north. Engels saw poverty as the natural result of capitalist society, for by logical development the labour theory of value involved poverty for the proletariat, especially when it was unorganized: Disraeli, sympathetic as he was with the plight of the workers, looked on the trade unions as secret subversive societies⁴³, which in a way they were, for they were forced to be, and he saw the poverty of the workers as the natural outcome in a state where the ruling class had abandoned its duties. Coleridge had insisted "there are no rights whatever without corresponding duties"⁴⁴, and Southey⁴⁵ and Carlyle⁴⁶ both looked back with envy to feudal society in which the ties between man and man had been more than the "cash nexus". Monypenny reports a speech of Disraeli's in Shrewsbury in 1843 in which he also commended to his audience the fundamental principle of the feudal system: "the tenure of all property should be the performance of its duties -- 'the noblest principle that was ever conceived by sage or ever

practised by patriot."⁴⁷ This attempt to make rights once more imply duties, and the attack on aristocrats who do not fulfil their duties is still being used⁴⁸ as it was used by Disraeli and Carlyle.⁴⁹ Young England tried to arouse in the Tories some awareness of their duties to those they ruled, to present to them an idealized picture of medieval society, to show them by contrast the evils of the industrial system, and to make them feel concern for the working man; in a word, to convert them to the idea of an organic society.

For, put in its baldest terms, Disraeli's central premiss about the human situation is only that human society as a whole is like a live thing. Its essential qualities are continuity and vitality. From this all the rest would follow logically, if logic were relevant.⁵⁰

John Holloway speaks of Disraeli conceiving society as a live thing, and to take this kind of view of society implies interdependence of all aspects of society. It could not be enough for Disraeli if politics and society were vital; religion must be just as full of vitality, and in Tancred Disraeli tries to show how religion is necessary to the community, and how the Church can be a vital factor in human life.

Shelley had written in brilliant prose of the "necessity of atheism", but Burke, Coleridge, Southey, Carlyle and Disraeli were united in their belief in the necessity of faith. Although Burke had written against the partisan pulpit⁵¹, he was convinced that "man is by constitution a religious animal; that atheism is against, not only our reason, but our instincts;"⁵² and Coleridge believed that humanity did indeed "LIVE BY FAITH".⁵³ For Carlyle the same was true: "There is but one thing without honour; smitten with eternal barrenness, inability to do or be:

Insincerity, Unbelief."⁵⁴ Southey was also convinced of the importance of religion,⁵⁵ and Disraeli himself thought that ethics without religion was an impossibility.⁵⁶ Burke saw the Church as the foundation of the English constitution;⁵⁷ Southey thought that the first duty of the government was the moral improvement of the people.⁵⁸ Coleridge thought the Church ought to mediate between the people and the government.⁵⁹ The conservatives, then, were convinced of the relevance of Christianity, for they saw the Church as a carrier of tradition, of the nation's heritage, educating and holding together the people in an organic society, and in Tancred Disraeli is dealing with one of the three most important factors in his scheme for the improvement of England, trying to show the relevance of the "great Asian mystery"⁶⁰ to nineteenth-century England. His purpose is obscured by his obsession with Judaism, and at times Tancred deviates from its purpose, becoming a sort of Middle Eastern version of Coningsby, but nevertheless one can understand what is the main point of Tancred, confused as it is. Disraeli is writing of the importance to humanity of tradition and religion, of race, of Athens and Jerusalem and what they stand for.

It is the Jordan and the Ilyssus that have civilised the modern races. An Arabian tribe, a clan of the Aegean, have been the promulgators of all our knowledge; and we should never have heard of the Pharaohs, of Babylon the great and Nineveh the superb, of Cyrus and of Xerxes, had it not been for Athens and Jerusalem.⁶¹

In the trilogy, Disraeli presents to the reader, his romantic vision of the reformed Tory Party, his vision of the good society, and Tancred's vision of what causes good in men and states. All along, the emphases are on tradition and on the imagination, and they add up to a denial in every way of abstract rationalism, of the cynical, mechanistic approach

to politics, society, and ethics. It is this that makes John Holloway give him the title of a "sage". "The characters, the incidents, the author's explanations display everywhere that excogitated rationalisms are artificial, naive, crude, something that experience and maturity necessarily correct."⁶²

CHAPTER II

CONINGSBY: THE NEW POLITICS

John Holloway writes: "Every one of Disraeli's novels is centred upon a young man's growing to maturity, forming his views on the world, and finding his right place in it (Sybil is different only in that this happens to both the hero and the heroine.)"¹ Coningsby does not vary from this pattern in any way; it can almost be taken for a type. The novel starts with Harry Coningsby as a child, and ends with his marriage to Edith Millbank and his election to Parliament. But Disraeli is attempting to write something beyond the romantic story of a young man's growing to maturity and the description of how he finds his right place in the world: he is trying to write the romantic story of Coningsby's generation. The "Coningsby Trilogy" is an attempt to lead his readers to political, social, and ethical maturity; it is Disraeli's attempt to answer, or at least to provide the groundwork needed in order to formulate an answer, the same question which was later asked by many other men, notably Chernyshevsky, Lenin, and Ignazio Silone, "What is to be done?" In Coningsby Disraeli tries to show to the reader that something must be done in the field of party politics, and he tries also to show what is required; he declared explicitly what his purpose had been in writing Coningsby in his Preface to the fifth edition of the novel:

CONINGSBY was published in the year 1844. The main purpose of its writer was to vindicate the just claims of the Tory Party to be the popular political federation of the country; a purpose which he had, more or less, pursued from a very early period of life.²

In order to become the "popular political federation", however, the Tory party would have to change, for the old, pre-reform Tories could never hope to have their "just claims" vindicated by election. Disraeli's attempt to fulfil his purpose, therefore, demanded that he illustrate the continuing condition of the Tory party, and the general condition of party politics, and then posit alternatives to these conditions. He does this by showing the reader Harry Coningsby's growing awareness of the realities of political life, of the possibilities for change, and the potentialities of that change. The old Tory party is represented in the novel by Coningsby's grandfather, Lord Monmouth, and his creature Rigby, and, on a lower level, by Tadpole and Taper. Over against these old Tories we have Harry and the friends of his youth, the "new generation" who represent the "Young England" movement, young, romantic, idealistic conservatives.

As far as Harry and his friends are concerned, the trouble with English politics is that there is essentially no difference between the Whigs and the Tories, no difference of principle, no distinguishing ideology. Taper and Tadpole, in their discussion of Tory tactics for the coming general election, show that this is the case:

'Hush!' said Mr. Tadpole. 'The time has gone by for Tory governments; what the country requires is a sound Conservative government.'

'A sound Conservative government,' said Taper, musingly. 'I understand: Tory men and Whig measures.'³

In other words, the main difference between the Tories and the Whigs was that the Whigs were in power, and the Tories wanted to be in power: as Disraeli himself said after his defeat at Wycombe in the 1832 general election, "The nearest thing to a Tory in disguise is a Whig in office."⁴

Disraeli's belief that principle is all-important, occurs again and again in his writings, both fictional and otherwise: Tancred, indeed, is wholly directed by that idea. For Taper and Tadpole, politics is a matter of organization, registration, graft, and public relations: principles, ethics, even religion count for nothing: "'I am all for a religious cry,' said Taper. 'It means nothing, and, if successful, does not interfere with business when we are in.'"⁵ As far as they are concerned political support and political discipline depend on the known desires of the "twelve hundred a-year" men.

It is a peculiar class, that: 1,200 l. per annum, paid quarterly, is their idea of political science and human nature. To receive 1,200 l. per annum is government; to try to receive 1,200 l. per annum is opposition; to wish to receive 1,200 l. per annum is ambition. If a man wants to get into Parliament, and does not want 1,200 l. per annum, they look on him as daft; as a benighted being.⁶

Coningsby's plight is that there are no Tory principles; when Lord Monmouth wants him to run for the Tories in Darlford, Coningsby implies this:

"'Before I support Conservative principles,' continued Coningsby, 'I merely wish to be informed what those principles aim to conserve.'"⁷ Lady

Everingham tells Lady Fitz-booby, a supporter of the old Tories:

You have not enunciated a principle for the last ten years: and when you seemed on the point of acceding to power, it was not on a great question of national interest, but a technical dispute respecting the constitution of an exhausted sugar colony.⁸

Eustace Lyle, the Catholic land-owner who has revived the medieval custom of alms-giving, tells Coningsby that he can see no such thing as "Conservative principles":

The Duke talks to me of Conservative principles; but he does not inform me what they are. I do serve indeed a party in the State whose rule it is to consent to no change, until it is clamorously called for, and then instantly to yield; but those

are Concessionary, not Conservative principles.⁹

These scattered, individual remarks give us a good idea of what Disraeli thought of the old Tory party, and of its so-called "principles", but the most telling attack on both the old-line parties comes from Coningsby and his Cambridge friends after they have helped the Conservative candidate for Cambridge win his election. Almost the whole of Book 5, Chapter 2 is an attack on the old parties, but the most concentrated, and most witty attack is contained in the caricatures of the two parties presented during the discussion in Coningsby's rooms:

'By Jove!' said the panting Buckhurst, throwing himself on the sofa, 'it was well done; never was anything better done. An immense triumph! The greatest triumph / the Conservative Cause has had. And yet,' he added, laughing, 'if any fellow were to ask me what the Conservative Cause is, I am sure I should not know what to say.'

'Why, it is the cause of our glorious institutions,' said Coningsby. 'A Crown robbed of its prerogatives; a Church controlled by a commission; and an Aristocracy that does not lead.'

'Under whose genial influence the order of the Peasantry, "a country's pride," has vanished from the face of the land,' said Henry Sydney, 'and is succeeded by a race of serfs, who are called labourers, and who burn ricks.'

'Under which,' continued Coningsby, 'the Crown has become a cipher; the Church a sect; the Nobility drones; and the people drudges.'

'It is the great constitutional cause,' said Lord Vere, 'that refuses everything to opposition; yields everything to agitation; conservative in Parliament, destructive out-of-doors; that has no objection to any change provided only it be effected by unauthorised means.'

'The first public association of men,' said Coningsby, 'who have worked for an avowed end without enunciating a single principle.'

'And who have established political infidelity throughout

the land,' said Lord Henry.

'By Jove!' said Buckhurst, 'what infernal fools we have made ourselves this last week!'

'Nay,' said Coningsby, smiling, 'it was our last schoolboy weakness. Floreat Etona, under all circumstances.'¹⁰

It is very simple, and very speedy: by a few satiric steps Buckhurst is shown that in achieving "the greatest triumph" he has been an unthinking schoolboy who has helped not a Conservative but a fellow Etonian to Parliament. The Conservative Cause, such as it is, is demolished, and all one can ask is "What is to be put in its place? The Whigs, the Radicals, or an unknown quantity?"

The Conservatives may have been speedily demolished by the young men, but it takes less time to destroy the claims of the Whigs:

'I, certainly, Coningsby,' said Lord Vere, 'shall not assume the Conservative Cause, instead of the cause for which Hampden died in the field, and Sydney on the scaffold.'

'The cause for which Hampden died in the field and Sydney on the scaffold,' said Coningsby, 'was the cause of the Venetian Republic.'¹¹

And since the young men are far more in favour of English Monarchy than a Venetian Republic, this is enough to damn the old Whigs. There are two Whigs among Coningsby's friends: Lord Vere, descended from the nobles of 1688, and a representative of the old Whig party ruled and led by a small junto in their own interests, and Oswald Millbank, the son of a manufacturer, a representative of the new Whigs, the capitalists who were joining and transforming the Whigs. Lord Vere cannot, of course offer an alternative to the other young men, who have said "A plague on both your houses," for there is essentially, in principle, no difference between the Whigs and the Tories. Southey, one of Young England's prophets, had said

so as early as 1829, and his words were a commonplace to Coningsby:

"The science of politics. . .has been erected by shallow sophists upon abstract rights and imaginary compacts, without the slightest reference to habits and history: but in ignorance of the one, and contempt of the other."¹² Nor does Oswald Millbank offer an alternative, for his Whiggism is not his own, but is derived from his father's Whiggism, which is itself a matter of tradition more than political conviction: Oswald's main purpose is to provide a discussion partner for Coningsby (and much of the political significance of Coningsby is conveyed through set discussions), and to make Coningsby aware, as Disraeli is aware, of the importance of such a phenomenon as Manchester. Manchester, and what Manchester represents does not have the importance in Coningsby which it has in Sybil, but nonetheless, it is important, because one cannot attempt to formulate theories for governing England, and simultaneously ignore the fact of the industrial revolution: "Instead of the city of the Violet Crown, a Lancashire village has expanded into a mighty region of factories and warehouses. Yet, rightly understood, Manchester is as great a human exploit as Athens."¹³ In spite of this apparent recognition of Manchester's power in Coningsby, it is an irony of history that Disraeli underestimated Manchester's importance, for the industrial revolution made his plans for Tory Democracy impossible, and the Conservative party remained, and still remains, a "concessionary" party, in order to obtain and retain popular electoral support. Besides making Coningsby aware of Manchester, however, Millbank has one other political purpose, as Stephen Graubard points out: "The implication was clear; men like Millbank would not remain

Whigs if men like Monmouth, Rigby, Taper, and Tadpole did not determine Tory policy. A new policy was needed which would attract such men."¹⁴ Oswald is not a Whig Coningsby; he is a possible Tory, and his existence suggests the existence of others like him, all potential Tories waiting to be organized into voting for Young England as Oswald is eventually led to join Young England in the Commons in the 1841 General Election.

Disraeli dismisses the Whigs, but, more surprisingly, he ignores the Radicals; this is surprising, when one considers that he had run for Parliament as a Radical, and to some extent he shows that he is underestimating Manchester by doing so. However, Coningsby is not intended to provide a survey of all the political alternatives offered to England at the time, but is mostly intended to serve as a political manifesto for Young England. If we accept, and the reader is meant to accept, Lord Vere's judgment: "The Whigs are worn out, Conservatism is a sham, and Radicalism [because Disraeli sees it as a destructive and unimaginative creed] is pollution,"¹⁵ the only way left is Young England, Radical Toryism, Tory Democracy. Since it is the Conservative alternative to the old Toryism of Lord Monmouth, its characteristics are obvious; one need only reverse the statements made about the Conservative Cause by Coningsby and his friends during their discussion. Coningsby and the other young men would like to see a political movement which could be said without irony to be "The cause of. . .glorious institutions"; these institutions would be a Crown restored to its prerogatives, a Church free from the control of a lay Commission appointed by Parliament, and an Aristocracy that would be prepared to lead the people. This cause would aim to restore the peasantry, to act according to principles which had been

clearly enunciated, and to re-establish political honesty in the government of England. Here we have the dreams of Young England, whose creed was first outlined by Disraeli in 1840 in a letter to Charles Atwood with a naive simplicity:

an union between the Conservative Party and the Radical Masses offers the only means by which we can preserve the Empire. Their interests are identical; united they form the nation: and their division has only permitted a miserable minority, under the specious name of the People, to assail all rights of property and person.¹⁶

Finding that their utopia, conceived under the influence of Bolingbroke, Southey, and Carlyle, was not to be brought about by the Tory Party of the day, they hoped to change the party and bring about a society in which Coningsby's ideals could be realised:

Let me see authority once more honoured; a solemn reverence again the habit of our lives; let me see property acknowledging, as in the old days of faith, that labour is his twin brother, and that the essence of all tenure is the performance of duty;¹⁷

The Tories would have to change, and before one can change one must know why that change is necessary: Disraeli does not describe the change itself in this novel, though we see the young men changing their political ideas and principles, but he is concerned with the need for change. Not only does he discuss, or make his characters discuss, the maladies of the Tory Party, but he also discusses what is wrong, as far as he is concerned, with the political situation in England. As Sybil is concerned with the condition of England as a society, Coningsby is concerned with the condition of England as a political milieu. The real political milieu had no place for the radical medievalism of Disraeli or of Coningsby: desire for principled politics, high regard for the Church of England, and the

wish to find a third way between the Liberals and the old Tories. Coningsby realised that he had little hope of a satisfactory career in politics because of the current situation, which he outlined to Millbank: "This then, is our position. The man who enters public life at this epoch has to choose between Political Infidelity and a Destructive Creed."¹⁸ The "Destructive Creed" is Liberalism, Radicalism, or Democracy: by "Political Infidelity" Coningsby refers to the one characteristic which the Tory Party had. The Party had little relevance to the real, ideological, political situation in England; the Industrial Revolution had done little to change the party:

The Tory Party was little more than the union of all men and groups who regarded Jacobinism as something to be resisted and destroyed. . . .It remained the party of the Church of England, of public order and administrative efficiency, of continuity and traditionalism in methods of government. It clung to a hierarchical and aristocratic notion of society, later to be embodied in the Mid-Victorian doctrine of 'the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate.'¹⁹

What hope could there be for a party which stood for "continuity. . .in methods of government" in a period which was seeing unparalleled social reconstruction, which comforted itself with Mrs. Alexander's too-complacent hymn? Society has changed, and Coningsby, aware of this, fears that the result will be violent:

Anointed kings turned into chief magistrates, and therefore much overpaid; estates of the realm changed into parliaments of virtual representation, and therefore requiring real reform; holy Church transformed into a national Establishment, and therefore grumbled at by all the nation for whom it was not supported. What an inevitable harvest of sedition, radicalism, infidelity!²⁰

Disraeli is, of course, painting the picture in garish colours; one must realize how much the state of the English Constitution in the 1840's

annoyed one whose idea of monarchy was founded on Bolingbroke's idea of the Patriot King, and who thought of the Church, not as one other branch of the political establishment but as a body of Divine ethical import:

"The Church is a sacred corporation for the promulgation and maintenance in Europe of certain Asian principles, which, although local in their birth, are of divine origin, and of universal and eternal application."²¹

Despite his consuming interest in politics, and the fact that Coningsby is the novel of politics par excellence, Disraeli did not forget the importance of ethical and religious principles: indeed, as far as he was concerned, there was no dichotomy between ethics and religion,²² and religion was a political issue in the eighteen-forties. Oswald Millbank points out to Coningsby, who has been telling Oswald of his political dissatisfaction, that ethics are also important. "But there are higher duties and interests for man beyond political obedience and social comfort, and national greatness, higher interests, and greater duties."²³ However, this novel is not concerned with religion, nor with the Church: religion does not enter the novel, except as a political issue, as is also the case with regard to Sybil. One cannot ignore ethical questions when one attempts to discuss politics or the state of society, but Disraeli adheres quite closely to his scheme, and leaves the discussion and treatment of ethics per se to Tancred. Young England had its religious views, though they were not so distinctly formulated nor so unified as its political views. In this novel Disraeli concentrates on the Young England analysis of party politics: Coningsby is a novel of party politics and political life, as distinct from a novel about politics and political issues in general. It is for this reason that there is very little said in the novel of the

views of the Tory Democrats on the Monarchy, nor is there much of the medievalism which is more pronounced in Sybil, and especially pronounced in Lothair, where medievalism is the main attraction of the Church of Rome. Sidonia tells Coningsby that "the tendency of advanced civilisation is in truth to pure Monarchy",²⁴ and Eustace Lyle holds alms-givings on the model of the pre-Reformation Abbey and treats Harry and his friends to a medieval Christmas at St. Genevieve, but the novel is not about these things in the sense that one can say it is about the Tory Party. This is merely "merry nonsense", while the political aspects of the novel, though they may at times amuse the reader, are serious in the end. By means of fiction Disraeli is simply promoting the views expressed in his Vindication of the English Constitution:

There are three points to the furtherance of which we should principally apply ourselves: 1st. That the real character and nature of Toryism should be generally and clearly comprehended: 2ndly. That Toryism should be divested of all those qualities which are adventitious and not essential, and which, having been produced by that course of circumstances which are constantly changing, become in time obsolete, inconvenient, and by the dexterous misrepresentation of our opponents even odious; 3rdly. That the efficient organisation of the party should be secured and maintained.²⁵

In writing Coningsby Disraeli attempted to present to the reading public the character of the Tory Party and his ideas of what its policies and principles should be; he attempted to fulfil the third point when he became the leader of the Tory Party.

Politically, Coningsby is a success inasmuch as Disraeli does manage to do what he tries to do. His attempt, however, is not single-minded or unilateral, for he expresses idiosyncrasies which distract the reader from the main burden of the novel. In addition many have objected

to the novel on the grounds that its politics are unreal and misguided. The first is a more serious fault than the second, as far as a literary discussion of Coningsby is concerned. Although the reader cannot help but judge Disraeli's political analysis, and this judgment may give the reader pleasure, one cannot condemn a writer merely because one does not like his politics. Much can be said for and against Ezra Pound, for example, but no matter how much one can condemn him as a political thinker for his Fascism and his childlike belief in Social Credit, one must pay attention to his mode of expression as well as to what he is expressing in order to judge him as a poet. Similarly, in considering Disraeli's trilogy as literature, it is not enough to condemn the politics of Young England and then dismiss Coningsby, Sybil and Tancred on the grounds that they are expressions of an unviable ideology. Disraeli's politics strike one as a weird mixture of Marx and Carlyle, Engels and Southey, William Morris and Bolingbroke - a sort of medievalist social fascism - but in attempting to evaluate Coningsby as a novel we must try to judge how Disraeli expresses his political ideas.

Disraeli did what he hoped to do in Coningsby: he presented his ideas in a manner which made them easy to assimilate, in a work of fiction which holds the reader's attention. There are a number of reasons for the book's success when it was published, and why it is still read, and why it is still being published. There have been objections to the novels, some aimed at Disraeli, some to the very idea of a political novel: those which apply to Disraeli are concerned in the main with his style. Since there is not much difference in his style between each of the novels of the

trilogy, it seems best to leave a discussion of it to the conclusion of the thesis, but one may observe that in Coningsby, Sybil and Tancred Disraeli's use of the English language had far surpassed his writing in the earlier novels; he uses nothing like the "non-English" of Alroy, where the description of Alroy rushing to rescue his sister Miriam from the clutches of Alshiroch is ludicrous, though the style is not much worse than that in the rest of the book: "Pallid and mad, he swift upsprang, and he tore up a tree by its lusty roots, and down the declivity, dashing with rapid leaps, panting and wild, he struck the ravisher on the temple with the mighty pine."²⁶ Even in Tancred, there is nothing to compare with this doggerel prose. J. A. Froude, Leslie Stephen, and F. T. Russell bring more serious objections to bear on Coningsby: Miss Russell reminds us that Edward Dowden had said in Transcripts and Studies, "a political manifesto in three volumes is not a work of art."²⁷ Leslie Stephen writes of "the inconvenience of combining politics with fiction,"²⁸ and Froude is even more condemnatory: "The famous trilogy 'Coningsby', 'Sybil', and 'Tancred', though of far greater value than Disraeli's earlier works, have the fatal defect, as works of art, that they were avowedly written for a purpose."²⁹ But how fatal is this "fatal defect?" It did not prove fatal to George Orwell's 1984, to Ignazio Silone's Fontamara and Bread and Wine, to Marek Hlasko's The Eighth Day of the Week, to Upton Sinclair's Jungle: did the "fatal defect" stop people from reading No Love for Johnnie or Advise and Consent? On the contrary, all these books are being read so widely that they have all been published in cheap editions, and yet they were all "avowedly written for a purpose". There is

no valid reason why politics should not be the subject of a novel, any more than why any other sphere of life in society should be taboo. All novels have something to say to the reader, all novelists wish to communicate something to the reader, and the reader wishes to be told something in a way which gives him pleasure. Didactic writing can only be objected to when it does not stimulate the reader, and this is very much a matter of individual taste. A fundamentalist Marxist will not object to the didactic passages in The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists, nor to the didactic scenes in Andrzej Wajda's film Generation, though these same scenes may annoy or bore a conservative. Far from being a "fatal defect", the combination of politics and fiction gives Coningsby much of that quality which has kept it alive.

Politics entertains for two reasons, each of which corresponds to a separate and distinct kind of politics in Coningsby: on the one hand, Disraeli interests the reader by a display of "inside knowledge" in the sphere of party politics and the conflict of political personalities, while on the other hand Disraeli catches his interest by political conceptions, by the ideology of the book, by the politics of ideas. "Inside knowledge" attracts many readers, and there is a lot of "inside knowledge" in Coningsby, so much that it is to a certain extent a roman à clef: in the book we see the private lives of politicians and embryonic politicians, and politicians are shown not just as public figures but as private men. Furthermore, we see the machinations behind the scenes, the hidden manoeuvring of Tadpole and Taper. The false reputation of Rigby who used Lucian Gay as his political ghost-writer, the importance of political

dinners and political dames, and the petty jealousies of public men. Disraeli knew all these at first hand, for by 1844 he was in the political swim, and he passes it all, or almost all, on to the reader. Leslie Stephen thought that this made Coningsby the best novel of the trilogy, and while I do not agree with his judgment, I feel that this knowingness is of prime importance among the attractions of the novel: "'Coningsby, if I am not mistaken, is by far the ablest [of the novels], and probably owes its pre-eminence to the simple fact that it deals with the topics in which its author felt the keenest interest.'"³⁰

Disraeli was not only keenly interested in politics, and aware of what happened in party politics, but also a member of the Young England group. As Lewis Apjohn observes, "the ambitions of Coningsby were his own ambitions. The dangers which he foresaw for Coningsby's new party were the dangers which he foreboded for himself and his friends."³¹ In a way, Coningsby is an imaginary autobiography in which Disraeli plays two parts: Harry Coningsby, the type of Young England contains a lot of Disraeli in his make-up, and Disraeli the politician of 1844, the thinker, the prophet of Tory Democracy, is represented by Sidonia. The sense of immediacy, of relevance, a sense of the author's personality in Coningsby, makes for the reader's added interest. The common reader reads much of journalism and autobiography; he is captivated by temporal and personal immediacy. Now, more than a century after the publication of Coningsby, one might expect that although personal immediacy would still attract readers to the book, the temporal would have lost its magic; but on second thoughts, one realizes that politics as an activity has not changed so much from Disraeli's, especially in North America, and what Disraeli has to say about the

behaviour of people in politics is just as relevant now as it was when Coningsby was written.

In Coningsby politics is not only a matter of people, political hostesses and bright young men, and of machinations, but also a matter of principles and ideas, especially the ideas of Young England, the ideas outlined in Chapter I of this thesis. These ideas contribute to the novel's interest and stimulate the reader for Disraeli stands politics on its head and does the same with our archetypal ideas about the political parties. There are various archetypes of political parties current in society, and in a two-party state such as Disraeli's England they number five; one is the archetype of the man who gives allegiance to neither party, and looks on all politicians as grafters. The liberals and conservatives divide the other four equally, having archetypal ideas not only about their enemies but also about their own party. The liberal regards his own party as a party of progress, while he looks on the conservatives as being adherents of reaction. For the conservative, his own party is the party of moderation and good sense, while his opponents are a collection of demagogues and potential revolutionaries. Disraeli turns these ideas inside-out and upside-down; as far as Harry Coningsby is concerned, the Whigs are the true conservatives, who wish to retain all the features of what Young England called "the Venetian State" (a republic with a crowned president holding office by consent of his aristocratic Council who were the true rulers of the land - this is what some Whigs felt the 1688 Revolution had made England and Disraeli agreed with them, but unlike them, disliked this form of state), while the Conservatives are the potential revolutionaries,

although reactionary, who are going to restore "old Merry England". The Conservatives want change, the Whigs want to conserve.

The ideas of Young England, which have been described in Chapter I, would be enough to make many a reader pay attention to the novel, even if he were not as affected by them as was Sir Joseph Wallinger, presented dramatically through arguments between the characters as they were, but Disraeli engages our imagination more by making his characters throw out what may be called peripheral ideas, ideas which were in the atmosphere of Young England, but not of its very essence, and by inserting his own comments into the narrative, or even by presenting ideas which go off at a tangent from the mainstream thought of Coningsby.

In one of his remarks about politics, he says something which goes a long way towards explaining the public interest in his writing, when he talks of the importance of the personality of a leader, and the interest in personality of the general public:

It is the personal that interests mankind, that fires their imagination, and wins their hearts. A cause is a great abstraction, and fit only for students; embodied in a party, it stirs men to action; but place at the head of that party a leader who can inspire enthusiasm, he commands the world. We are more interested in men than in abstractions.³²

This statement causes the reader to reflect, and it gratifies him to find that his own experience confirms what Disraeli says as true. Another time, Disraeli may show in a paragraph that there is a grain of truth in the often repeated platitude of a member of a victorious political party that a strong opposition is necessary for the best workings of parliamentary government:

No government can be long secure without a formidable Opposition. It reduces their supporters to that tractable number which can be

managed by the joint influences of fruition and of hope. It offers vengeance to the discontented, and distinction to the ambitious; and employs the energies of aspiring spirits, who otherwise may prove traitors in a division or assassins in a debate.³³

There is no claptrap here about the value of debate or the need for a viable alternative to the government: Disraeli is stripping bare the sayings of political leaders and showing the reader the not-so-nice realities underneath. He is being extremely honest about the management of a political party, and this is refreshing.

Sometimes, instead of interpolating a comment in the person of the author, he makes Sidonia speak for him, in his function of being the ideal Disraeli; Sidonia may speak to the point, and illuminate for us the ideas of Young England, or he may digress and give us idiosyncratic Disraeli. Young England, in revolt against the Manchester school as much as they were opposed to Lord Monmouth's version of Toryism, reject statistics in favour of impressions, reason for romanticism, and Sidonia speaks for them when he talks of the importance of imagination: "Man is only truly great when he acts from the passions; never irresistible but when he appeals to the imagination. Even Mormon counts more votaries than Bentham."³⁴ Just before he says this, he has already told Coningsby of the irrelevance of economics to politics; one may disagree, and in the light of the historical evidence it is almost imperative that one should disagree, but nonetheless the statement stimulates the reader even if it does no more than annoy. Part of our interest in Coningsby is that he thinks, and we watch him learn to think; our interest is engaged by argument, just as Harry becomes interested in what Sidonia has to say.

Sometimes, however, Sidonia speaks in riddles, giving us hints of the

"great Asian mystery", conveying Disraeli's semi-mystical approach to the Jewish race. When he talks of the Jews we are disturbed, for what have these intimations of racial destiny to do with a novel about English politics; what Disraeli is doing is preparing us in Coningsby, the first novel of the trilogy, for the theme of Tancred, the third novel. In throwing out these hints and thoughts, Disraeli is remembering what he himself wrote in his "Mutilated Diary" in 1833, when he objected to the literalness and dullness of the Utilitarians: "The Utilitarians in politics are like the Unitarians in religion; both omit imagination in their systems and imagination governs mankind."³⁵

Disraeli has no intention of omitting imagination in his novels, neither his own imagination nor that of his readers, and the resultant effect is added control of his readers' attention. For although he can control our attention for a while by his own wit, the irreverent way in which he treats his subject matter, or by the presentation of startling ideas, he can do this more easily by mystifying us. If a whole book is little more than one long mystification, as Tancred is, there is a danger of boring the reader, and if the mystification is slight, there is a chance of annoying the reader: although the use of mystery is very much part of Disraeli's charm, it is a technique which will not appeal to all readers. Sir Leslie Stephen writes of the "uncertain twilight" tone of Disraeli's novels, this mixture of illusion and reality, mystery and irreverent exposition, as being distinctive of Disraeli as a novelist, as being his main attraction for those who enjoy his work: "The lights and shadows fluctuate, and solid forms melt provokingly into mist; but we must learn to

enjoy the uncertain twilight which prevails on the borderland between romance and reality, if we would enjoy the ambiguities and the ironies and the mysteries of 'Coningsby'."36 All in all, if the reader has the patience required for reading it, Coningsby is intellectually stimulating: the weakest feature of the novel is its romantic plot-base. For although Harry Coningsby is interesting as an embryonic politician, he is not so interesting as a man.

"Coningsby, Egremont, Tancred. . .all think--perhaps ineffectually, ignorantly, fitfully, but in their puzzled or impulsive way / they do think, and about their social rights and responsibilities;"37 What Mrs. Tillotson is essentially saying is that Coningsby is interesting as a political being, as one who thinks about political matters. The rest is dull, and ill-conceived: he is a romantic hero, in a romance which is highly-coloured, extremely optimistic, operatic:

The adjective 'operatic' recurs in the criticism of Disraeli's novels, and it is an appropriate word. For these intensely topical books, / documented by contemporary social surveys and inquiries, are technically about as far from naturalistic realism as one could well go.³⁸

This dichotomy between romance and reality gives Disraeli's novels their own distinctive appeal, and some critics are prepared to argue in favour of the complementary nature of the two parts. Two diametrically opposing judgments by typical critics such as Stephen Graubard and John Holloway have been made of Coningsby as a novel rather than as a vehicle for political ideas. Stephen Graubard has little to say for Coningsby as a novel: "it showed the faults characteristic of other of Disraeli's literary efforts: an improbable plot, insubstantial character portrayal, and an excessive romanticism."³⁹ John Holloway, rejecting this approach for its

simplicity, and convinced that Disraeli is "one of the liveliest and most versatile novelists of his period"⁴⁰ claims that both sides of Coningsby, and of all his novels interrelate: "The lighter side of Disraeli's work both interprets, and makes more sympathetic, the side which is more in earnest."⁴¹ This view seems to me more tenable, if only because it credits Disraeli with some intelligence: it is hard to see how one who could see through most clap-trap and verbal evasions, one who could laugh at his own politics, could have been completely unaware of the "excessive romanticism" of his plots.

The main reason, however, for reading Coningsby is the politics, and I feel that this is why the book is still read, above all other reasons. Disraeli has been proven wrong by history, and the Tory party would seem to owe at least as much to the principle of "Floreat Etona" as to any principles enunciated by Burke, Disraeli, or Churchill; his party has almost forgotten him, and he has become the man in whose memory the Primrose League was founded, and who founded Conservative Central Office, but despite this his ideas are as stimulating now as they were in 1835 when he wrote The Vindication or in 1844, when he published Coningsby. There are various reasons for reading Coningsby, but in the end they come down to one: it is a stimulating political novel and to read it is to give oneself an intellectual treat.

CHAPTER III

SYBIL: ARTICULATE INQUIRY

In the second volume of his Life of Benjamin Disraeli¹ W. F. Monypenny suggests that in 1844 Disraeli spent some time in the North of England gaining first hand knowledge of use to him in writing Sybil, the novel which is, more than any of his other novels, a contribution to the Condition-of-England discussion. In Coningsby he speaks of the material advances made in England in the first quarter of the century, suggesting that the Condition-of-England question arose because there was no corresponding moral and social advance in the country: "there was no proportionate advance in our moral civilisation. In the hurry-skurry of money-making, men-making, and machine-making, we had already outgrown, not the spirit, but the organisation, of our institutions."² Like Carlyle, he thought that Parliament, Church, and traditional social relations had become outmoded, but whereas in Coningsby and Tancred he examines politics and religion respectively, in Sybil he is a student of society, of the forces of change in society and of the various methods for the regeneration of society. He therefore has to portray all the important elements of society, and show how each element reacts to its new conditions of existence: he has to show us England in 1844. As Arnold Kettle says in his essay on the "Early Victorian Social-Problem Novel": "In this crowded novel all England is represented: the aristocracy, in both its effete and responsible aspects, the industrialists, the rural poor, the proletariat of several categories."³ Not all of these categories are represented with

the emphasis one would deem commensurate with the importance of each in English society in 1844, for Disraeli is not only a reporter, but also a man with a case to present, and this influences what he has to say and how he has to say it.⁴ In Past and Present Carlyle had written of the malaise which had fallen upon rich and poor who have both "forgotten to Live"⁵; Disraeli fastened upon this classification of society into rich and poor and Carlyle's picture of "idle luxury alternating with mean scarcity and inability"⁶ (Plato's division of society in Book IV of the Republic⁷). Though he had already touched on the bi-partite division of society in The Infernal Marriage⁸, one of his Lucianic fables, in Sybil he explores this theme to a much greater extent. Stephen Morley's exposition of this split in society is well known, but it should be quoted here in full that it may be remembered during the discussion of the novel.

'Well, society may be in its infancy,' said Egremont, slightly smiling: 'but, say what you like, our Queen rules over the greatest nation that ever existed.'

'Which nation?' asked the younger stranger [Morley], 'for she reigns over two.'

The stranger paused; Egremont was silent, but looked enquiringly.

'Yes,' resumed the younger stranger after a moment's interval. 'Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, are not governed by the same laws.'

'You speak of --' said Egremont, hesitatingly.

'THE RICH AND THE POOR.'⁹

In 1843 the Times¹⁰ had compared the conditions of the "two nations" contrasting the poverty of the "down-and-outs" in St. James's Park with

the splendour of nearby Buckingham Palace, and in 1844 Engels could write of the conditions of working class life in terms of class war: "In this country, social war is under full headway, every one stands for himself, and fights for himself against all comers."¹¹ Engels statement was founded on his acceptance of the labour theory of value, and the belief that economic conditions directly caused political situations. Disraeli did not accept this theory; in Coningsby Sidonia denies it: "'I think,' said Sidonia, 'that there is no error so vulgar as to think that revolutions are occasioned by economical causes. They come in, doubtless, very often to precipitate a catastrophe; very rarely do they cause one'".¹² Academic theory did not materially affect the fear and concern of those of the ruling class who were aware of the condition of England, for if economic causes occasioned revolution there was sufficient cause; if they merely served to precipitate revolution, there was sufficient misery among the working class to effect precipitation. Parliamentary Commissions had discovered the extent and intensity of that misery, and in Sybil Disraeli presents the evidence of the commissions, along with Carlyle's descriptions of the state of society and his own first-hand knowledge, in a fictional form. As the agricultural labourer said to Egremont, it was "hard times for the poor"¹³ and much of Sybil is an elaboration of that statement.

The handloom weavers had possibly suffered the greatest and most dramatic change of condition, and Disraeli, in his description of the plight of Warner makes the most of this drastic change in his condition, as indeed Carlyle¹⁴ and Engels had made much of it: "Of all the workers in competition with machinery, the most ill-used are the handloom weavers.

They receive the most trifling wages, and, with full work, are not in a position to earn more than ten shillings a week."¹⁵ In Sybil Disraeli allows the reader to over-hear the reverie of Warner working at his hand loom and thereby turns abstract statistics into an expression of personal misery and a personal indictment of capitalism. Dry statistics and economic theory transformed to flesh and blood in Philip Warner remind us that Carlyle's "half-a-million" means half-a-million men, and half-a-million families:

The capitalist flourishes, he amasses immense wealth; we sink, lower and lower; lower than the beasts of burden; for they are fed better than we are, cared for more. And it is just, for according to the present system they are more precious. And yet they tell us that the interests of Capital and Labour are identical.¹⁶

Though right in sound and character, these comments are identical in content with two passages in Carlyle's works, one in Past and Present¹⁷ and the other in Chartism¹⁸; but by putting Carlyle's words into the mouth of Philip Warner, Disraeli gives them the convincing touch of personal experience so that the reader is more ready to assimilate their significance. Though he does not occupy much space on the canvas Warner represents the typical poor man of the time: his children are starving, his wife is ill, and his daughter who has a job in the mill leaves home, tired of supporting her parents and the other children. Sometimes the children did not abandon their parents so drastically and instead of leaving home became lodgers in their parents' house.¹⁹ This was the result of the employers' marked preference for cheap labour which caused them to hire children rather than adults, and then to work these children into an early grave. The children were keen to work, for work meant independence and an escape from the poverty of the parental hearth; in

other words, this keenness which Dr. Ure professed to see in the child operatives sprang more from self-interest such as Caroline's (In Sybil p116, when Dandy Mick proposes the toast of "the rights of labour. . .the ten hour bill, no fines, and no individuals admitted to any work who have not completed their sixteenth year" Caroline, who is under sixteen, protests Mick's third clause: "No, fifteen," said Caroline, eagerly.") than from any joy in their work. Dr. Ure, however, is rhapsodic: "They seemed to be always cheerful and alert; taking pleasure in the light play of their muscles, enjoying the mobility natural to their age. The scene of industry, so far from exciting sad emotions in my mind, was always exhilarating."²⁰ But then Dr. Ure was a noted Liberal, and he shows the reader the sort of attitude which Disraeli was fighting. Harriet Warner had supported her family for a while, but eventually she left them; unfortunately babies took some time to become wage-earners, so Disraeli describes the child murder which did much to cut down the number of idle mouths and to keep the Malthusian scheme running. Devilsdust had survived his infantile doses of laudanum, but many did not. Such happenings were no small matter, for they suggested that capitalist society was reducing the worker to the social morality of the beast; and laudanum sales were very heavy, as Engels tells: "The coroner of Nottingham testified before a Parliamentary Commission that one apothecary had, according to his own statement, used thirteen hundred-weight of laudanum in one year in the preparation of Godfrey's Cordial."²¹ Demoralization was bound to result in a situation where slow child-murder was accepted as being natural, and Disraeli shows also the fatalistic belief of parents in the early death of

their children, a belief which was so strong that men and women joined burial clubs in their child's name in the expectation of profit, and they even killed their children in order to make a profit from the burial clubs, as Carlyle²² tells in Past and Present. Carlyle shows the importance he attaches to this facet of degeneration by placing a brutal account of child-murder at the beginning of Past and Present; Disraeli lets us know what he thinks of the demoralization of England by letting us hear the matter-of-fact tones in which a 'normal' mother speaks of the probability of her child's imminent death: "This poor babe can't struggle on much longer. It belongs to two burial clubs: that will be three pounds from each, and after the funeral drink and the funeral there will be enough to pay all our debts and put us all square."²³ Disraeli makes no comment, but no comment is required: the reader will ask himself the inevitable question, "What sort of society is this?" The woman cares for her child, but she looks on its impending death not as a tragedy but as a relief from debt: the burial club, like life insurance, is a ghoulish method of saving with the further merit of being certain to mature one day.

One immediate cause of this misery was the tommy-shop, and the practice of paying in goods rather than coin of the realm--the truck system.²⁴ Although Parliament had passed Truck Acts in 1831 to put a stop to this practice, employers characteristically evaded the law by paying workers cash at long and irregular intervals, selling them the necessities of life on credit in the meantime. Disraeli shows us the tommy-shop in action, and in Book VI Chapter VII he shows us the insurrectionists wreaking vengeance on the Diggies and their shop.²⁵ This

event, however, does not close the novel, for although the tommy-shop can be destroyed, it is only a symptom of society's sickness: Disraeli feels that the working classes are in need of moral improvement, and that to alleviate their distress there must be a change in the workers, and their rulers, and in the system their rulers maintain. As Carlyle insisted, there must be a general change of heart. Disraeli was to return to the theme of moral improvement in Tancred, but in Sybil he demonstrates the need for religion. There is little respect for religion among any class: Ambrose St. Lys, its representative, is a figure of amusement to his social superiors, and the proletariat do not know his God. As Disraeli says, St. Lys had come "among a hundred thousand heathen to preach 'the Unknown God'."²⁶ In Wodgate, there is a mock hierarchy, with the brutish locksmith Hatton for its Bishop, and even the "Christians" are ignorant of their faith:

'Yes, sir,' said the girl with the vacant face and the back like a grasshopper: 'I be a reg'lar born Christian and my mother afore me, and that's what few gals in the Yard can say. Thomas will take to it himself when work/ is slack: and he believes now in our Lord and Saviour Pontius Pilate, who was crucified to save our sins; and in Moses, Goliath, and the rest of the Apostles.'²⁷

Disraeli's argument is that the people need rulers and principles: the former would be presented by an ideal aristocracy, the latter by the teachings of religion, which ought to be far more than an opiate, or something to turn to when work was slack. He leaves religion in the main to Tancred, however, and in Sybil he discusses the aristocracy and the potential leaders of the common people.

Oswald Millbank's father had told Coningsby of the origins of the

aristocracy: "We owe the English peerage to three sources: the spoliation of the Church: the open and flagrant sale of its honours by the elder Stuarts: and the boroughmongering of our own times. Those are the three main sources of the existing peerage of England, and in my opinion disgraceful ones."²⁸ Disraeli had discussed boroughmongering in Coningsby. In Sybil he touches on these other two sources which Mr. Millbank had talked of, but although the spoliation of the Church has a bearing on the romantic plot inasmuch as it affects Walter Gerard's claim to Mowbray neither Gerard's claim nor Sir Vavasour's dream of the baronets affect what Disraeli is saying in Sybil. He may look back to history, but his main concern is with the present condition of the people and the aristocracy and not with their origins. As Monypenny says, Disraeli and Young England "like all the romantics. . . had an antipathy to the middle class";²⁹ in Sybil, therefore, as in Coningsby, Disraeli peculiarly splits society into two, mingling industrialists and aristocracy, and writes about the rich and the poor, the landowners and the workers. Engels's attack on the bourgeoisie is implied, but nothing so explicit as Engels comment is found in Sybil:

I have never seen a class so deeply demoralized, so incurably debased by selfishness, so corroded within, so incapable of progress, as the English bourgeoisie; and I mean by this, especially the bourgeoisie proper, particularly the Liberal, Corn Law repealing bourgeoisie. For it nothing exists in this world, except for the sake of money, itself not excluded. It knows no bliss save that of rapid gain, no pain save that of losing gold.³⁰

Although Disraeli makes references to the bourgeoisie, and to the prevailing bourgeois morality, Sybil is not an exposition of its faults, but rather an exposition of the faults of those in whom he thinks control

of England is vested.

In one of his own interpolated discussions in Sybil, he sums up the state of England thus: "A mortgaged aristocracy, a gambling foreign commerce, a home trade founded on a morbid competition, and a degraded people; these are great evils, but ought perhaps cheerfully to be encountered for the greater blessings of civil and religious liberty."³¹ To such a consolation Carlyle replied "Liberty, I am told, is a divine thing. Liberty, when it becomes the 'Liberty to die by starvation' is not so divine."³² We have seen Disraeli's description of the "degraded people", and we realize that their civil liberty is the liberty to work or starve and their religious liberty is the liberty of total ignorance; many of the aristocrats are in a more affluent but equally ignorant state. England was largely governed by aristocrats like Lord Marney, who knew nothing of the state of the country and the people. Though Adam Smith had spoken of "the demand for men, like that for any other commodity"³³ and Engels had taken offence at the use of the term "commodity" to describe human beings, Lord Marney would never think of taking offence at the phrase, for men were hands, operatives, anything but human beings for him. Morley had spoken of the gulf between rich and poor, "ignorant of each others habits, thoughts, and feelings"³⁴ and Nixon the working man tells Morley the same thing in another way:

And I'll tell you what, sir, that I never knew the people play [i.e. go on strike] yet, but if a word had passed atween them and the main-masters aforehand, it might not have been settled; but you can't get at them any way. Atween the poor man and the gentleman there never was no connection, and that's the wital mischief of this country.³⁵

We see the same difficulty of communication between Stephen Blackpool

and Bounderby in Hard Times, workers and employers in Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton. "There never was no connection" and the aristocracy did not want one; they preferred to live their own lives, and ignore everyone else. Instead of being leaders of the country, Disraeli felt aristocrats were exquisitely bored along with Alfred Mountchesney: "'I rather like bad wine,' said Mr. Mountchesney. 'One gets so bored with good wine.'"³⁶ (Here Disraeli by blending two different powers makes a major error that Carlyle avoided. The aristocracy may have been exclusive and bored but the factory owners, Carlyle's buccaneers, were full of energy, demonic energy, but a source of hope if it could be transformed as Carlyle hoped it would.)

When the aristocrats do become interested in something other than themselves, it is in something which is irrelevant to the urgent problems facing them. Lady Constance Rawleigh turns to geological speculation,³⁷ and Lady Joan Fitz-Warene's consuming interest in profound abstractions, contrasts amusingly with Alfred's vapidty at the Countess of Marney's assembly: "Alfred Mountchesney hovered around Lady Joan Fitz-Warene, who was gratified by the devotion of the Cupid of May-Fair. He uttered inconceivable nothings, and she replied to him in incomprehensible somethings."³⁸

Besides abstract thought, speculative geology, and boredom, the aristocracy had another pursuit, for which Carlyle flayed them - game preserving.³⁹ Bored, inane, ignorant of the condition of the people, forgetful of its natural duties, game-preservers rather than leaders, the aristocracy is well-nigh superfluous. Disraeli points out the lesson implicitly, Carlyle explicitly: "Aristocracies that do not govern,

Priesthoods that do not teach; the misery of that, and the misery of altering that,--are written in Belshazzar fire-letters on the history of France."⁴⁰ In a way, Disraeli is preaching a lay sermon from a text of Solomon - Proverbs XI, 28 and 29.

He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind:

There is a promise and a threat involved; Lord Marney and his kind trust in their riches, while Egremont is the righteous man. Lord Marney's class have troubled their own house, and they inherit the wind of Chartism, trade unions, riots, and the possibility of civil war.

Disraeli⁴¹ saw that the choice offered to the unskilled worker in an unalleviated, unmixed capitalist economic structure was a simple one--work or starve; Carlyle⁴² saw it before him, and in our own century Robert Tressell was to restate this from the viewpoint of the skilled tradesman in his "Painter's Bible" The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists.⁴³ The working classes had their own remedies for the situation: in the rural areas there was rick-burning, in the mines and mills there were riots and union-organization, and everywhere there was Chartism.

Egremont's first intimation that all is not as it should be in England is when he sees the ricks blazing on his brother's estate. He quickly finds out why the ricks were burnt, in talking to a farm labourer.

'And what do you think of this fire?' said Egremont to the hind.

'I think 'tis hard times for the poor, sir.'

'But rick-burning will not make the times easier, my good man.'

The man made no reply, but with a dogged look led away the horse to the stable.⁴⁴

The hind's answer seems evasive, but in this short scene Disraeli shows us the real nature of the incendiarism; it was not the act of conscious revolutionaries, but the symbol of inarticulate revolt. Rick-burning might have little effect on the ruling class, but it relieved the sense of oppression of the poor. Rick-burning might annoy the landed proprietors as it annoyed Lord Marney, but in the towns there was a movement gathering force which was to be a much greater threat to the power of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie: Dandy Mick was not the only man to join a union. In joining the union Mick Radway acts to further the achievement of his solution to the problem of how to make society better: "We'll have the rights of labour yet; the ten-hour bill, no fines, and no individuals admitted to any work who have not completed their sixteenth year."⁴⁵

Mick wants what Carlyle had said was "as just a demand as Governed men ever made of Governing"⁴⁶: a fair day's wages for a fair day's work. But no matter how just Carlyle thought the demand, Mick was convinced that the only way of obtaining it was through a "National Holiday": "'I tell you what,' said Mick, with a knowing look, and in a lowered tone, 'the only thing, my hearties, that can save this here nation is a--good strike.'"⁴⁷

The logical thing for Mick to do was to join a trades union and although Disraeli's description of his initiation reads like a lot of hocus-pocus and mumbo-jumbo, it is clearly based to a large extent on the Times⁴⁸ report of the initiation ceremony of Robert Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trades Union as given in evidence at the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs in 1834.

Mick's trades union is a class -organization, a group of employees organized against their masters; Stephen Morley's socialism is utopian and is not a class-based theory. In a way, Morley's communalism is like Disraeli's organic society for in both men are regarded as social animals, though Disraeli does not deny privacy of the individual as Morley does, even to the extent of wishing to destroy the family: "Home is a barbarous idea; the method of a rude age; home is isolation, therefore anti-social. What we want is Community."⁴⁹ Disraeli would agree that we want community, and so would Egremont, but not at Morley's price; Walter Gerard said "There is no community in England; there / is aggregation, . . ."⁵⁰ and this was part of England's trouble.

Rick-burning, trades unions, socialist agitation, were all contributory factors to the rise of Chartism by preparing a way for a mass working class organization. Working men and members of the petty bourgeoisie all over England rallied to the support of the six points of the People's Charter⁵¹ and the Chartist Convention of 1839 in great numbers, though they were split over the question of what was to be their next move. The men for the south were non-violent, but O'Connor's men from the north were in favour of fighting for their rights. Walter Gerard has learnt political strategy from Burke and his followers, for although he would oppose Burke's rejection of the principle that "twenty-four millions ought to prevail over two hundred thousand",⁵² he knows with Burke that "our patience will achieve more than our force."⁵³ Carlyle had written in Past and Present of how the overwhelming numbers of the common people lent urgency to their questions:

Behold us here, so many thousands, millions, and increasing at

the rate of fifty every hour. We are right willing and able to work; and on the Planet Earth is plenty of work and wages for a million times as many. We ask, If you mean to lead us toward work; to try to lead us,--by ways new, never yet heard of till this new unheard-of Time? Or if you declare that you cannot lead us? And expect that we are to remain quietly unled, and in a composed manner perish of starvation? What is it you expect of us? What is it you mean to do with us?⁵⁴

Gerard puts his faith in the number of the people, whose increase will give them added strength to win in the end: "What are your invasions of the barbarous nations, your Goths and Visigoths, your Lombards and Huns, to our Population Returns"⁵⁵ he asks Egremont. In the end Gerard dies by violence, indirectly by the violence of his own people. Sybil herself knows the impossibility of revolution, though as a daughter of the people she does not reject revolution per se; her argument is practical, not theoretical: "The people are not disciplined; their action will not be, cannot be, coherent and uniform; these are riots in which you are involved, not revolutions"⁵⁶ she tells her father. This is not a complete rejection of the revolutionary principle, but a description of a specific historical context showing that O'Connor's violent policies in 1839 were not viable. The questions Carlyle asked demanded an answer, nevertheless, and one possible answer was revolution; it all depended on what the aristocracy were to do. If they put their faith in repression, like Castlereagh and Lord Marney, there would, Disraeli says, be revolution, but if they acted in accordance with the ideas of Disraeli and Egremont there would be a peaceful solution. Marney's incapacity is clear: "The torch of the incendiary had been introduced for the first time into the parish of Marney"⁵⁷; but Lord Marney has no idea that he and his actions have any connection with it: "'I wonder why ricks are burnt now, and were

not in the old days,' said Egremont. 'Because their is surplus population in the kingdom,' said Lord Marney, 'and no rural police in the country.'"58 This is no answer to Egremont's question, for Lord Marney does not consider why there is now a surplus population, and after all there were no rural police "in the old days". Lord Marney has no solution to the problem. He intends or wishes merely to tackle a symptom of unrest, not the cause. Disraeli, on the other hand, wants to tackle the cause of the problem, and to answer Carlyle's question "What farther?"

Reform Bill proves to be a failure; Benthamite Radicalism, the gospel of 'Enlightened Selfishness', dies out, or dwindles into Five-point Chartism, amid the tears and hooting of men; what next are we to hope and try? Five-point Charter, Free Trade, Church Extension, Sliding-Scale; what, in Heaven's name, are we next to attempt, that we sink not in inane Chimera, and be devoured of Chaos?59

Disraeli's answer to the question is to suggest a union of aristocrats and workers, between the people and the ruling class, between Sybil Gerard and Charles Egremont whose symbolic marriage closes the novel. Such a solution to the problems facing English society was, and is, almost ludicrously inadequate; it involves a confused conception of society, in which at times bourgeoisie and rentiers are treated as having identical interests, and at others the bourgeoisie is looked upon as a class which infringes on the rights of both aristocracy and proletariat. Disraeli could only think it possible because he knew and remembered the dislike, even hatred, which both the workers and the landowners felt for the bourgeoisie, and because he did not know or forgot (or chose to forget) the mutual dislike of aristocrats and workers.⁶⁰ He hoped for great things from a union of aristocrats and workers, and his feeling for the aristocratic traditions of leadership and remembrance of Tory mobs of the past betrayed him into

theories which are historically absurd, yet whose very absurdity makes them stimulating.

Sybil, like all Disraeli's heroines, bears the stamp of nobility: Philip Warner's wife calls her "an angel from heaven"⁶¹ and Egremont calls her a "ministering angel",⁶² Lord Valentine "raved"⁶³ over her after her marriage to Egremont, and conveniently, she does have noble blood. Sir Leslie Stephen remarks on the way in which Disraeli provides all of his heroines with fitting scenery, and Sybil does not miss the benefits accorded to Henrietta Temple, Venetia, or May Dacre, although the locus of the novel is industrial and urban England.

All Disraeli's passionate lovers--and they are very passionate--are provided with fitting scenery. The exquisite Sybil is allowed, by way of exception, to present herself for a moment in the graceful character of a sister of charity relieving a poor family in their garret; but we can detect at once the stamp of noble blood in every gesture, and a coronet is ready to descend upon her celestial brow.⁶⁴

John Holloway⁶⁵ points out that there is a lot of cottage visiting in the novels of Disraeli; after all, cottage visiting was expected of any aristocrat aware of his or her social responsibilities, and all Disraeli's good aristocrats are aware of their duties as well as of their rights. Dickens at least cut through this humbug philanthropy in his depiction of Mrs. Pardiggle's visit to a brick worker's cottage in Bleak House.⁶⁶ Sir Leslie Stephen has his tongue in his cheek when he talks of the "exquisite Sybil" and her "celestial brow" for like all of Disraeli's heroines she is too beautiful, too good (though no Esther Summerson), too attractive to be true; but she is not only a fine woman, she is also a symbol of the latent nobility of the English people and as such she speaks for the

people. She is the good proletarian in the same way that Egremont is the good aristocrat. She is "a child of the people",⁶⁷ and her sympathies are with the people; along with her father and Stephen Morley she has a part to play in Egremont's education, in the furtherance of his appreciation of the condition of the working classes.

'When I remember what the English people once was; the truest, and the freest, and the bravest, the best-natured and the best-looking, the happiest and most religious race upon the surface of this globe; and think of them now, with all their crimes and all their slavish sufferings, their soured spirits and their stunted forms; their lives without enjoyment, and their deaths without hope; I may well feel for them, even if I were not the daughter of their blood.'⁶⁸

Disraeli has wrought a curious effect here, for behind the words of the balanced sentence, the antithesis between what had been or could yet be and what was the case, the reader can sense the deep hatred of an intelligent, class-conscious revolutionary, for the dehumanising power of the capitalist system, and Sybil is a revolutionary, as is Egremont, for both want to subvert "the system".⁶⁹ At the same time Disraeli is guilty of the common (one might say typically conservative) failing of deploring the present by idealizing the past. Sybil is dissatisfied with the status quo when we first meet her, but Egremont has to learn, he has to develop intellectually. Kathleen Tillotson remarks on the fact that the heroes of the novels of the eighteen-forties think, "perhaps ineffectually, ignorantly, fitfully, but. . . / they do think."⁷⁰ Disraeli's heroes not only think, they must also learn what to think about, they have to be taught. Coningsby and Tancred are taught by Sidonia; Egremont is taught by Morley, Gerard, Sybil, and his own eyes. At the start of the novel Egremont is almost the stereotype of an aristocrat; the milieu in which

the reader first makes his acquaintance is in his club just before Derby day, and talk is all about horses and betting. Before the novel is over he attempts to reject his family and his class in order to gain Sybil, who has just found out he is the brother of the hated Lord Marney:

"'The brother of Lord Marney!' repeated Sybil, with an air almost of stupor. 'Yes,' said Egremont; 'a member of that family of sacrilege, of those oppressors of the people, whom you have denounced to me with such withering scorn.'" ⁷¹ But Sybil believes that the gulf between the two nations is impassable so she rejects him, at least for the time being; Egremont must change her view, and progress in his thinking, until he is prepared to act as an aristocrat to help the working class, and although the time is not yet ripe for that he can, and does, act as Disraeli himself acted in 1839, in the July 12 debate. He said he had sympathy for the Chartists, but he had disapproval for the Charter itself; he protested the indifference of both parties to the Chartist Petition, and then he voted against its acceptance. This puzzled his fellow M.P.'s as Egremont puzzled his fellows. ⁷² Egremont can act as an apologist for the people, but without widespread support among his own class he cannot do much more. In his marriage to Sybil, however, he can symbolize what Disraeli hoped would happen. ⁷³ Disraeli could envisage two methods of destroying what was evil in his contemporary society: the first was violent revolution and he had given grounds for the rejection of this method in Contarini Fleming:

Is it an irrevocable doom, that society shall be created only to be destroyed? When I can accept such a dogma, let me also believe that the beneficent Creator is a malignant demon. Let us meditate more deeply: Let us at length discover that no society can long subsist that is based upon metaphysical absurdities. ⁷⁴

The alternative was non-violent revolution, subversion of capitalist society and return to pre-capitalist standards in politics, social intercourse and ethics--in fact an impossible turning back of the clock; honest politics, humane social relations between classes, and widespread faith would, he thought, prevent violent revolution and remove the causes of class war. The first part of this triple programme is the subject of Coningsby, the third is the subject of Tancred.⁷⁵ Sybil is an exposition of the second, though all three subjects are touched on in all three novels.

Disraeli's hope for society was founded on "an union between the Conservative Party and the Radical Masses"⁷⁶: in his speech at a banquet given in his honour at Maidstone in December 1837 by a local banker he told his audience what he meant by the term "the Conservative Cause":

By the Conservative Cause I mean the splendor of the Crown, the lustre of the peerage, the privileges of the Commons, the rights of the poor. I mean that harmonious union, that magnificent concord of all interests, of all classes, on which our national greatness and prosperity depends.⁷⁷

It is easy enough to joke at Disraeli's idea along with the anonymous writer in the Edinburgh Review who described it as "a holy alliance. . . between the Crown and the Chartists"⁷⁸ or with the Earl of Cromer and Juvenal: "When [Disraeli] spoke of a "union between the Conservative Party and the Radical masses" he meant a union between the "patricians" and the working men, and the answer to this somewhat fantastic project is that given by Juvenal 1800 years ago:-

Quis enim iam non intellegat artes Patricias?" [Satire iv] 101-102.⁷⁹

However, it must be borne in mind that Disraeli and his associates were

acting and talking in all seriousness, and Engels, no lover of the aristocracy whether reformed or not, gives them credit for their concern: "Their object is of course unattainable and ridiculous, a satire upon all historic development; but the good intention, the courage to resist the existing state of things and prevalent prejudices, and to recognise the vileness of our present condition, is worth something anyhow."⁸⁰ Engels is right; the Young Englanders deserve credit for their social consciences, and Sybil is the artistic expression of reaction to the condition-of-England question by the man who was possibly their most imaginative associate. According to Stephen Graubard, Disraeli intended that Sybil "should be read as a commentary on the England of his day",⁸¹ and it is in this way that I have read the book. Although Disraeli's plots are usually fantastic, and Sybil is no exception in this respect, it is an over-simplification to ascribe terms such as "operatic"⁸² and "fairy-tale"⁸³ to a novel which was primarily intended to arouse and convey ideas. For this reason, if Sybil is to stand or fall on any one element, it must be on its content. It is erroneous too to condemn Disraeli for exaggeration in his description. Qualifications such as these, of course, are necessary to determine his exact value, but they are not the heart of the matter.

It is a matter of discussion whether or not Disraeli exaggerates, and a reading of Engels leads one to believe that any departure from the documentary in those parts of Sybil which show the reader the working classes is more a matter of selection than of exaggeration, but in the last analysis this is irrelevant, as Raymond Williams points out:

Anyone who is prepared to give credit to Disraeli's unsupported authority on any matter of social fact has of course mistaken his

man, as he would similarly mistake Dickens. But Disraeli, like Dickens, is a very fine generalizing analyst of cant, and almost as fine a generalizing rhetorician of human suffering. Both functions, it must be emphasized, are reputable.⁸⁴

Williams has put his finger on an aspect which gives this novel added strength; in spite of Disraeli's discernible blind spots, it is concerned with the difference between illusion and reality, between things as they seem and things as they are. In his Life of Lord George Bentinck Disraeli wrote about the comparative insignificance of names: "Let us not be deluded by forms of government. The word may be republic in France, constitutional monarchy in Prussia, absolute monarchy in Austria, but the thing is the same."⁸⁵ Chaffing Jack, in Sybil, bears witness to the people's willingness to accept illusions; "name's everything; made the fortune of the Temple; if I had called it the Saloon, it never would have filled."⁸⁶ Sybil is written to portray things as they are, to show the reader the condition-of-England, and therefore its object is to dispel illusions, and to do this in an interesting and attractive fashion.

These are serious features which make the book enjoyable, but Sybil is no dull documentary; as John Holloway points out, "there is never any drabness"⁸⁷ in Disraeli's novels, and there is plenty of wit, for Disraeli is amused as well as angered by the world about him and he can even laugh at his own ideas, as his picture of Sir Vavasour Firebrace, steeped in romantic medievalism, bears witness. Furthermore, there is the same sense of individual, personal, first-hand knowledge which the reader gets in Coningsby: again, the plot development is arbitrary and may disgust the mechanical determinist but amuse one who can enjoy the arbitrariness of plot-development in Joseph Andrews and The Pickwick Papers: "casual

events,. . .delightful, exhilarating operations of chance."⁸⁸ There is a long tradition behind Sybil, which is more than just a condition-of-England novel, stretching back to Piers Plowman, and it is this which makes the novel one which the reader can return to for enjoyment and instruction. Arnold Kettle, personally and politically so very different from Disraeli, appreciates this, and in his judgment on Sybil he justifies the work: "What, in the end, makes Sybil readable is the total sense the book involves (a whole greater than the sum of its parts) of breadth of intelligence. This really is what Carlyle asked for--articulate inquiry into the Condition-of-England question."⁸⁹

CHAPTER IV

TANCRED

Initium sapientiae timor domini. Proverbs, 9, x.

In 1847, the year in which Tancred was published, religion was a burning issue in England; it had become prominent in 1833 with the suppression of the ten Irish bishoprics by Earl Grey and John Keble's subsequent sermon "National Apostasy" and the foundation of the Tractarian movement; then in 1845 John Henry Newman had joined the Church of Rome. Disraeli is not concerned directly with Newman's deviation when he writes Tancred¹, though the Oxford Movement was essentially conservative, but religion itself is very important in the novel. As Coningsby was Disraeli's political manifesto, and Sybil his approach to society, Tancred is his religious manifesto, Disraeli's ethical standpoint has already been outlined in Chapter I: opposition to the Utilitarians, belief in the incompatibility of ethics and atheism, conviction that the Church is a divine corporation--these are his main ideas. In Tancred, through his development of the character of Tancred Montacute, using Tancred's education as he used the education of Egremont and Coningsby, he presents his ethical ideas, examines them, and presents alternatives. Andre Maurois observes that the purpose of Tancred was to serve "mainly as a pretext for the author to develop his theories of Judaism and the Church."² Maurois is correct in his description of the book but he underestimates Disraeli's intentions and what he achieves in writing Tancred, for Tancred is a commentary on the human condition as much

Coningsby and Sybil are; Carlyle, and, after him, most of the social novelists emphasized the need for a change of heart to precede any change in society and in the novel Disraeli says what he has to say ~~about~~ the need and the direction for regeneration of English morals. However, Maurois is more correct in his judgment of Tancred than is Professor Graubard, who says: "Disraeli did not know what to do with his hero once he had launched him on his travels."³ Disraeli was not a totally unconscious artist, and Tancred does have a design though one may have to look hard to see it; this fact is borne out, for example, by the way in which Disraeli supplies a parabolic instance of one of his theses. In a peculiar blend of Burke's criticism of proletarian rights and Carlyle's criticism of aristocratic privileges, the cornerstone of his criticism of England's ruling class is that while they are conscious of their rights they are unaware of their duties, and he shows that even cooks cannot escape the duties incumbent upon them because of their rights: "Leander, then, like other eminent men, had duties to perform as well as rights to enjoy; he had a right to fame, but it was also his duty to reform and direct public taste."⁴ Disraeli shows the reader a correspondence between dukes and cooks, thereby reinforcing the lesson for aristocrats and simultaneously smiling at his own thesis by presenting its reductio ad absurdum. This pointedness is evidence of conscious art. Tancred has a purpose, and Disraeli knows where he is going and where he is sending Tancred, who has a goal even though he frequently digresses. Tancred is a seeker after truth, a "new crusader". As his ancestor went in search of the Holy Sepulchre, he goes in search of truth and a viable ethical theory for his guidance. He tells his father

the object of his new crusade, reminding him of their crusader ancestor Tancred De Montacute:

Six centuries and more have elapsed since that great enterprise. It is time to restore and renovate our communications with the Most High. I, too, would kneel at that tomb [the Holy Sepulchre]; I, too, surrounded by the holy hills and sacred groves of Jerusalem, would relieve my spirit from the bale that bows it down: would lift up my voice to heaven, and ask, What is DUTY, and what is FAITH? What ought I to DO, and what ought I to BELIEVE?⁵

Tancred is young, naive, and puzzled; his simplicity is shown by his phraseology, for who but one whose faith is childlike could talk about renovation of "communications with the Most High"? His bewilderment is equally clear, for he can ask pertinent questions but he cannot answer them; he has already made this uneasiness clear earlier in the conversation:

"Our morals differ in different counties, in different towns, in different streets, even in different Acts of Parliament. What is moral in London is immoral in Montacute; what is crime among the multitude is only vice among the few."

"You are going into first principles," said the duke, much surprised.

"Give me then second principles," replied his son, "give me any."⁶

The novel records Tancred's search for principles: first he must reject the empty world of English society, and then he must find positive principles. He searches for them among the Jews, Arabs and Ansarey, and in the end finding them he thereby gains maturity; he can attempt to answer Oswald Millbank's question to Coningsby: "But there are duties and interests for man beyond political obedience, and social comfort, and national greatness, higher interests and greater duties. How would you deal with their spiritual necessities?"⁷ Tancred must first of all receive personal experience of the need of the people for "higher interests and greater duties"; he must

appreciate how England is "a country divided between infidelity on one side, and an anarchy of creeds on the other."⁸ In England in the eighteen-forties "the gospel of political economy"⁹ prevailed, and men considered severe evangelical Christianity quite compatible with this new gospel; historically the start of England's bourgeois revolution, the Great Rebellion of Cromwell, had been won with "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon", and in the era of colonization the two fore-runners of the Queen's government were to be missionaries and traders. France, and Europe, was "enlightened"¹⁰, England was evangelical. The attack on Christianity, on faith as Disraeli conceived it, was two-fold; one attack was not conscious that it was an attack and was bound up with material considerations, the other was philosophical. Southey had demonstrated the inherent incompatibility of capitalism and the ethic of the acquisitive society with Christianity: "While gain is the great object of pursuit, selfishness must ever be the uppermost feeling. I cannot dissemble from myself that it is the principle of our social system, and that it is awfully opposed to the spirit of Christianity."¹¹ Tancred becomes personally aware of this incompatibility through his relationship with Lady Bertie and Bellair, "the most inveterate female gambler in Europe"¹² according to Sidonia. He meets Lady Bertie by accident and is drawn to her because she simulates an interest in Jerusalem. He is sorely disillusioned when he reads the note over which she faints one day when he is visiting her.

The note ran thus:

3 o'clock.

'The Narrow Gauge has won. We are utterly done; and Snicks tells me you bought five hundred more yesterday, at ten. Is it possible?

Lady Bertie, so interested in the new crusade, fainting over the loss of a wild gamble, makes Tancred realize how much more money and gain count to Lady Bertie and those like her than any "spiritual necessities". Tancred is shocked to realize that in the nineteenth century men and women "instead of [on] the third crusade, . . . expend their superfluous energies in the construction of railroads"¹⁴ although he has already shown his awareness of the corruption attendant on Railway Acts, when he tells his father: "The railroads may have improved, in a certain sense, the condition of the working classes almost as much as that of members of Parliament."¹⁵ Lady Bertie turns this abstract conception into a concrete experience, and the event impels him one more step in the direction of Jerusalem.

The divergence of aims and ethics between Christianity and capitalism is a serious matter for Tancred, but worse is brewing. In the forties experimental science was developing at an unprecedented rate and, as a result, so was speculative science; Joule¹⁶ was at work, James Clerk-Maxwell was a youth, and the geologists were beginning to theorize. The Origin of Species was not published till 1859 but evolutionary ideas had been circulating as early as the forties in books such as Chambers's Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation (1844), which Disraeli ridicules in Tancred under the title of The Revelations of Chaos, which Lady Constance Rawleigh describes to Tancred. He thinks the subject obscure: "No longer so," said Lady Constance. "It is treated scientifically; everything is explained by geology and astronomy, and in that way. It shows you exactly how a star is formed; nothing can be so pretty! A cluster of vapour, the cream of the milky way, a sort of celestial cheese, churned into light, you must read it, 'tis charming."¹⁷ The image is ludicrous and Tancred is not swayed;

"Nobody ever saw a star formed."¹⁷ Tancred, like Disraeli, is "on the side of the angels"¹⁸, and feels no need to parry society's questions about his crusade.

'Why should Tancred go to Jerusalem? What does it signify to him whether there be religious truth or political justice? He has youth, beauty, rank, wealth, power, and all in excess. He has a mind that can comprehend their importance and appreciate their advantages. What more does he require? Unreasonable boy!'¹⁹

By the time Tancred leaves London society the reader knows why he rejects the world: the world is secular and irreligious, if not anti-religious. Even the Church of England which ought to have been "a sacred corporation"²⁰ has failed Tancred:

'I find its opinions conflicting, its decrees contradictory, its conduct inconsistent,' replied Tancred. 'I have conferred with one who is esteemed its most eminent prelate, and I have left him with a conviction of what I had for some time suspected, that inspiration is not only a divine but a local quality.'²¹

The locality to which inspiration is limited is Palestine, "the land of inspiration"²², the home of the Hebrews to whom the world owes so much, but Britain owes most:

. . .the most popular poet in England is the sweet singer of Israel. . . .Vast as the obligations of the whole human family are to the Hebrew race, there is no portion of the modern population so much indebted to them as the British people. It was 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon' that won the boasted liberties of England; chanting the same canticles that cheered the heart of Judah amid their glens, the Scotch, upon their hillsides, achieved their religious freedom.²³

Disraeli is proud of his origins, that he is a member of one of the most cohesive and single-minded peoples in history, whose chief purpose in life for a long time was to glorify Jehovah. A strong feeling of Jewishness pervades Tancred, and the novel could hardly have been written by a

Gentile. Even Disraeli's methods of referring to God are more Jewish than English, derived from the Old Testament rather than the New.²⁴ At the climax of his sojourn in Palestine, Tancred climbs Mount Sinai, and is favoured by a vision from God, to whom he addresses the questions which have been troubling him.

'Why art thou silent? Why no longer do the messages of thy renovating will descend on earth? Faith fades and duty dies. A profound melancholy has fallen on the spirit of man. The priest doubts, the monarch cannot rule, the multitude moans and toils, and calls in its frenzy upon unknown gods.'²⁵

The vision does not disappoint him, however; it gives him religious guidance, implying evangelicalism to some extent: "Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. Fear not, faint not, falter not. Obey the impulse of thine own spirit, and find a ready instrument in every human being."²⁶ The atmosphere of the Middle East satisfies Tancred. He gains self-confidence but, although he now knows his religious duties and blessings, he has no experience of any other system, so he goes into the hills to meet the Ansarey and to be reminded of the classical tradition. Young England set great store by faith but Coleridge, and to a lesser extent, Carlyle, among Disraeli's sources of ideas, set as much store by education and intellect.

As the Jews and Jehovah represent religion, so the Ansarey and the gods of Olympus stand for all that is beautiful and intellectual, though the Ansarey do not strike one as being intellectual. The symbolism involved is a method, a technique used to give added weight to the myths of the Greek gods; for they were still worshipped, Disraeli said, in the nineteenth century. Describing the Ansarey as a lost tribe of Greeks worshipping the

Greek gods, Disraeli makes them serve to represent Hellenism, the harmony and order of Phoebus Apollo. When Tancred and Queen Astarte speak of gods, she reminds him of the twelve Olympians; when the discussion is over they go to the temple grove where Tancred recognizes the gods of the Ansarey as the familiar gods of Greece.

"The gods of the Greeks!" exclaimed Tancred.

"The gods of the Ansarey," said the queen; "the gods of my fathers."

"I am filled with a sweet amazement," murmured Tancred. "Life is stranger than I deemed."²⁷

What is strange is not that the Ansarey did exist but that Disraeli invented a new religion for them; they were not Greeks, nor was their religion: "The Anzairies (or Nassarians) are really a very different people from anything here presented. Their religious peculiarities date only from the year 890 and are remarkable for their mixture, not of Paganism, but of Christianity with the Shiite section of Mahomedanism"²⁸. Disraeli is altering facts to suit his own purpose. Tancred could not be made to go so far away from Palestine as Greece, yet he must reject Greece: to solve the problem Disraeli invents a "pocket Greece" and sends Tancred there. Sir Leslie Stephen says that Tancred learns wisdom "by sitting at the feet of Sidonia"²⁹, but Stephen is wrong. Sidonia starts Tancred off on his pilgrimage and makes his stay in Palestine easier by supplying him with money, but what Tancred learns he learns by experience. He learns the importance of the "great Asian mystery" to modern Europe, and modern Europe's debt to its classical past, the value of tradition; "it is the Jordan and the Ilyssus that have civilised the modern races".³⁰ The thought, Milton's and Arnold's, is not unique to Disraeli: it is a question of emphasis. The Hebrew tradition is

made more important; Tancred spends a long time among the Jews, but his visit to Queen Astarte is a short episode. The reader's impression is that Disraeli implies that the classics are pleasant and are part of life but that religion and ethics are far more important; but both are part of England's traditions and tradition is all-important. John Holloway points out that in the very last sentence of the novel (The Duke and Duchess of Bellamont had arrived in Jerusalem) Disraeli shows that Tancred's parents have at last "felt the power of those traditional influences that meant so much to their son."³¹ Tancred develops an idea which Sidonia passed on to Harry Coningsby: "Yet the Jews, Coningsby, are essentially Tories. Toryism, indeed, is but copied from the mighty prototype which has fashioned Europe."³² Whereas Coningsby is an example of the man who can make politics good, Tancred is the man who can make himself good with the help of God: the first will legislate for Disraeli's ideal England and the followers of the second in legislating according to their consciences will also contribute to Disraeli's ideal.

Tancred finds the answer to his questions in Palestine and thereby becomes mature. In this process Disraeli is following the set pattern of his novels. In the other two novels of the trilogy Disraeli presents not only his own theories but their converse: Coningsby and Rigby, Young England and the "old-line" parties, Sybil and Egremont and Lord Marney, capitalists and chartists are all compared and contrasted. In Tancred he contrasts "enlightened Europe" with the Middle East in its better aspects, Tancred with Emir Fakredeem, the saint with the schemer. Both of the young men are in search of a goal; but Tancred's goal, though it has private significance

for him, has public significance for his generation, while Fakredeeen's goal of an earthly kingdom, though a public matter, has significance for himself alone. Fakredeeen does not care about his possible subjects; he wants power. He is a political animal, an unethical Coningsby or a brighter, more exotic version of Tadpole and Taper. Neither Taper nor Fakredeeen are religious men in the sense that religion has any personal relevance to them; Taper was all for a religious cry because "It means nothing, and, if successful, does not interfere with business when we are in,"³³ and Fakredeeen has no deep religious convictions, preferring Henri IV's dictum that Paris is worth a mass. He is wholly prepared to change his professed faith for personal gain; "Our ancestors," he tells Eva Besso, "became Christians to conciliate the Maronites. Now tell me: in Europe, an English or French prince who wants a throne, never hesitates to change his religion, why should I be more nice? I am of that religion which gives me a sceptre,. . ." ³⁴ Tancred, on the other hand, is concerned with principles all through the novel: he tells his father "nothing can endure, or ought to endure, that is not founded upon principle;" ³⁵ three books later he tells Fakredeeen that principles are all-important: "To conquer the world depends on men not only being good soldiers, but being animated by some sovereign principles that nothing can resist." ³⁶

Tancred is an idealist, a Tory of the Young England variety; Fakredeeen is a practical politician (though, when one considers his lack of success the adjective ought to be "impractical") and despite his origins a liberal in his concern with money and his political opportunism. This contrast is brought out when the two young men discuss Fakredeeen's

possibilities of success.

"If I could only raise a loan," said the Emir, "I could do without France or England."

"A loan!" exclaimed Tancred; "I see the poison of modern liberalism has penetrated even the Desert. Believe me, national redemption is not an affair of usury."³⁷

Tancred's romantic soul is shaken by Fakredeen's materialistic and cynical attitude, but Fakredeen can even rationalize away his debts by giving them positive use in their effect on him, the encouragement they give him to achieve his ends; they are as valuable an asset to him as his youth. Debts and youth, he says, are the "two greatest stimulants in the world to action, . . . Any young prince ought to win the Lebanon, but a young prince in debt ought to conquer the world!"³⁸ Fakredeen, in fact, loves his debts at times: "'What should I be without my debts?' he would sometimes exclaim: 'dear companions of my life that never desert me! All my knowledge of human affairs is owing to them; it is in managing my affairs that I have sounded the depths of the human heart, . . .'"³⁹ Disraeli was no stranger to the pressures of debt and Monypenny suggests that this passage in Tancred "if we allow for some whimsical exaggeration, reflects undoubtedly a personal feeling of Disraeli's."⁴⁰ There is a lot of Disraeli in Fakredeen--both dream of political power, both are colourful, both Christianized Jews, both heavily in debt, both leaders of men and reconcilers of opponents; even Fakredeen's opportunism emerges in Disraeli's later career. Fakredeen is wrong and dishonest, even deceitful, but he is not bad and he does not alienate the reader's sympathy; Disraeli has entered into him enough to make him an engaging character. He is primarily a foil for Tancred, but he is no dummy or paste-board figure. In the last analysis, however, he is wrong and

Tancred is right, and the contrast between the two is carefully calculated, for Tancred is a novel with a purpose, not a collection of character sketches.

Froude says Tancred was "of all his writings. . .that which he himself most esteemed;"⁴¹ however, he found difficulties in writing the novel as he told Lady Londonderry in a letter of 26 December 1846: "My hero, whose name is 'Tancred', will make his appearance in a month. He has turned out a much more troublesome and unmanageable personage than I anticipated."⁴² But if Disraeli found it difficult to write Tancred some critics have had even more trouble in attempting to understand and interpret the novel. Sir Leslie Stephen asks "What does it all mean? Or does it all mean anything?"⁴³; Ernest A. Baker wonders if Tancred conveys anything to the reader, and he has little to say for the book, maintaining that "we are constantly on the brink of some revelation that never comes,"⁴⁴ and asking "Is there any secret?"⁴⁴; such puzzlement is natural, for Tancred is not clear-cut in its meaning as are Coningsby and Sybil. Two reasons can be given for Disraeli's saying little which can be easily understood about the "great Asian mystery" in Tancred: Sir Leslie Stephen gives the reason for his own bewilderment when he says, "In Tancred we again come upon the true vein of mystery in which is Disraeli's special idiosyncrasy";⁴⁵ Tancred turns upon a mystery and when a mystery is made clear, is explained and then understood, it is no longer a mystery. Were it capable of rational explanation, it would be no mystery. Disraeli is dealing with mystery in Tancred; in Sybil and Coningsby he dealt with everyday matters in the lives of everyday men, and the burden of these books is clear for all to comprehend.

Although Disraeli is a practical politician, he is dealing in Tancred with religion and its spiritual power, that is, with the non-rational; he cannot explain the mystery, he can only hope that there is sufficient common religious ground between him and his reader that the reader will absorb a sense of the mystery about which he is writing by some sort of literary and emotional osmosis.

Like Arnold later, he is dividing conscience and intellect into Hebraism and Hellenism. Conscience, even in writers as committed to reason and order (Nietzsche's Apollo) as Arnold, is at least partly irrational. Following this division of rational and irrational further, we come to Nietzsche, Fraser, Freud and Jung, and the general desire of twentieth-century literature to oppose civilization itself, as order, and to rediscover the primordial, irrational energies of the individual.⁴⁶ It is small wonder if Disraeli senses a mysterious power, where a whole century was shortly to probe for it, and where Blake had already found it. If he read Carlyle's essay "Characteristics", he was already familiar with the view that the major part of man's life and creativity springs from the unconscious, a view even expressed in the kind of language we expect from Jung. The "Asian mystery" involved not only a rejection of the world and the morality of fashionable society but, more important, an awareness of "the insignificance of the human scheme"⁴⁷ in secular Europe. Disraeli wrote about the "Asian mystery" impelled by his background of Judaism and in order to satirize the mammonism, superficiality and secularism of the England of his day. The satire is not concentrated, as nothing is concentrated in this slow-moving novel which relies more on striking sympathetic emotional chords in

the reader than on the graphic power of outright statement, but it is there and it is occasionally virulent; while *Tancred* is in Europe, Disraeli's habitual optimism seems to leave him to some extent, though not wholly. Optimism and a light-hearted view of life is an idiosyncrasy of Disraeli, and his idiosyncrasies appear continually in his novels: in a lighter vein there is the treatment of cooks and cooking at the opening of *Tancred*⁴⁸, more seriously there is his Judaism. The light touch and the satire express Disraeli's ideas on one level in *Tancred*, all adding up to a rejection of values in mid-Victorian society; Disraeli's Judaism may be the key to a deeper significance of the book.

Disraeli was very conscious of race (as were his contemporaries) and of his own Jewish ancestry, which seems to have fascinated him all his life; *Tancred* is full of race theory and Judaism. Monypenny says "the feeling of race is so strong in *Tancred* that it almost swallows up that which it was designed to illustrate"⁴⁹, but I feel Monypenny is wrong for it is Disraeli's insistence on Jewishness and things Jewish that points out what is the message of *Tancred*; *Tancred* is a Jewish book. Disraeli, with his conservative belief in the value of tradition, lays great stress on the Jewish origins of Christianity, at a time when the Oxford Movement was stressing the patristic heritage of Christianity, and as he pleads in *Coningsby* and *Sybil* for a return to earlier and purer traditions in politics and in society, in *Tancred* he pleads for a return to the old, traditional, Hebraic religion. The Church of England, he implies, ought to be like the old Jewish priesthood, a sacred body whose purpose was to propagate the "great Asian mystery", and this mystery is contained in the Old Testament, in the

Law and the Prophets. Disraeli does not say this explicitly: in Tancred, more than in Coningsby and Sybil, he attempts to convey ideas and feelings to the reader through a medium of an assumed common emotional attitude towards ancient Israel between him and his readers. Both Disraeli and his readers knew their Bibles, and knew the Old Testament, the book of ancient Israel; he could assume emotions in his readers vis-a-vis Israel which resembled his own emotions, and he could certainly assume knowledge of ancient Israel in his readers. Because of these assumptions which he could rightfully make, Disraeli does not have to be as explicit in Tancred as he has to be in Sybil and Coningsby, in writing which he could not assume favourable bias or knowledge in his readers, and this makes it more difficult to grasp what these implicit assumptions meant in the novel. At the same time, because he can make assumptions, it is easier for him to appeal to the reader through his emotions, to persuade the reader that the true object of the Church ought to be the propagation of the "Asian mystery", the ideal of "theocratic equality",⁵⁰ as Tancred is instructed by the angel on Mount Sinai.

The equality of man can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God. The longing fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common father. The relations between Jehovah and his creatures can be neither too numerous nor too near. In the increased distance between God and man have grown up all those developments that have made life mournful. Cease, then, to seek in a vain philosophy the solution of the social problem that perplexes you. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. Fear not, faint not, falter not. Obey the impulses of thine own spirit and find a ready instrument in every human being.⁵¹

These words have a definite Old Testament ring about them: the first five sentences recall 1 Samuel 8, when the Israelites ask for a king, and God

tells Samuel: "Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should reign over them" (1 Samuel 8, vii). By taking a king the Jews rejected the direct rule of God: but true religion involves, if it is personal, the direct rule of God over believers, "theocratic equality", calling to mind Judges 21, xxv: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes". Disraeli cannot look, with Newman, to Rome and Apostolic Succession for authority, so with the Jews he turns to the Law of God. Emphasizing man's religious instinct over his intellect as a source of creativity in all fields of life (Palestine, not the Ansarey), he stresses the Jewish aspect of Christianity, getting back to the period before Greek thought blended with the Judaic in Christianity (Tancred's spiritual home is in Jerusalem, not in "enlightened" Frangestan nor among the artistic Ansarey): even the use of the name "Jehovah" in the angel's speech is significant of the Hebraic emphasis. Finally, in mixing "equality" with religion, and getting "theocratic equality" Disraeli is probably equating religion with law, equality before God with the Englishman's proud (and ignorant) boast that in England all are equal before the law. This involves a political idea of religion, a new twist on Jacobin phrases about equality, and it is also a pre-Christian twist. By the end of the novel Tancred has made his "progress to a particular point"⁵² spiritually as well as spatially, as have his parents, and the reader who has gone with him has learnt of the importance of the Hebrew tradition that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs IX, 10) and that the ideal prayer for a disciple of Disraeli's legalistic approach

to religion would be Psalm 119 section He:

33. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.
34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
35. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.
36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.
37. Turn away mine eyes from viewing vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.
38. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.
39. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.
40. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis I have accepted Disraeli's statement in the general introduction to his novels of 1870 that "CONINGSBY, SYBIL, and TANCRED form a real Trilogy; that is to say, they treat of the same subject"¹, and I have discussed the manner in which a different aspect of the "Condition-of-England" question is presented in each novel. Most critics² have accepted the three novels as a trilogy, and there are obvious connections and similarities between the novels: the same characters appear in more than one of the novels, the novels are set in the same period of time, the theories of each novel complement those of the other two, and the novels have similar patterns. Objections to treating the novels as a trilogy have usually been objections to coupling Tancred with the other two; an example of this approach is Lewis Apjohn's argument that "Tancred contributes absolutely nothing to advance the theory of national government in England which Coningsby and Sybil so ably set forth."³ Mr. Apjohn furnishes his own answer; if one is to look for mere politics in all three novels, one will be disappointed, for Disraeli's interpretation of the implications of a discussion of the "Condition-of-England", like Carlyle's, is catholic, embracing more than the idea of a remedial national government. The pattern of the trilogy is simple, yet it demands recognition of the novels as a coherent group; in the first novel, Coningsby, the subject is party politics, in the second, Sybil, the subject is social unrest, and in the third, Tancred, the subject is religion and ethics. Disraeli thought of the three

as being interdependent, and any man who thinks about Disraeli's proposition must recognize its validity; one cannot separate completely the spheres of Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred. The novels must be studied together as a trilogy; at the very least one finds that to read one increases one's understanding of the other two.

However, just as one cannot fully appreciate one of the novels without its context of the trilogy, one cannot fully appreciate Disraeli's accomplishment without the literary context of similar attempts by other authors. I now propose, therefore, to examine the literary context to some extent by comparing Disraeli's work with some aspects of the work of Mrs. Gaskell, Thackeray and Dickens. Donald J. Greene has explored the similarities between Mrs. Guy Flouncey and Lord Monmouth in Coningsby and Becky Sharp and Lord Steyne in Vanity Fair in a note in Nineteenth Century Fiction;⁴ his case holds water and therefore it is unnecessary to restate it, though it could be valuable to notice the dissimilarities between Monmouth and Steyne in order to appreciate the differences between Disraeli and Thackeray.

Both Monmouth and Steyne are portraits of Francis Charles Seymour-Conway, third Marquis of Hertford (1777-1842). The Dictionary of National Biography says little about him, other than that he is best remembered as the model for Steyne and Monmouth. Lord Steyne, in Vanity Fair, is a cruel man, ugly in body and spirit: Thackeray describes him thus: "He had thick bushy eyebrows, with little twinkling bloodshot eyes, surrounded by a thousand wrinkles. His jaw was underhung, and when he laughed, two white buck-teeth protruded themselves and glistened savagely in the midst of the

grin. He was. . .short. . .broadchested and bow-legged."⁵ This is a picture of a monster of dissipation, "notorious" in his youth "for his daring and success at play"⁶, cruel in his old age, mistreating his daughters-in law and implacable in his anger. When Rawdon Crawley surprises him and Becky, his reaction is that of a stage villain; "Steyne rose up, grinding his teeth, pale, and with fury in his looks."⁷ Fiche, his valet, tells Becky of the implacability of his anger, doubled when he saw Becky in Rome; "She has offended somebody: who never forgives--whose rage redoubled when he saw you. He was like a madman last night when he came home."⁸ Such is Lord Steyne: a villain of villains, easy to anger and impossible to placate, dissipated, cruel, and arbitrary. Thackeray's thumb-nail sketch is a vivid, brilliant caricature.

Disraeli's portrait of Lord Monmouth is of much greater length than Thackeray's sketch of Lord Steyne; but Monmouth plays a much more important role in Coningsby than does Steyne in Vanity Fair. For this reason, Disraeli tells us more about Monmouth than Thackeray tells us of Steyne, but because the portrait of Monmouth is dispersed throughout Coningsby it lacks the vividness of the short portrait of Steyne. Lord Monmouth, like Hertford and Steyne, is a voluptuary, "full of violence instead of feeling, and eccentric, because he had great means with which he could gratify extravagant whims."⁹ Above all, he is civilized in an eighteenth-century, Augustan, sort of way; his reaction to his first meeting with Coningsby is typical: "He hated scenes. He hated feelings. He saw instantly the mistake he had made in sending for his grandchild."¹⁰ Lord Monmouth cannot love, he can only use; "Yes, Lord Monmouth never could live with a woman more than two years"¹¹ mused Mr. Ormsby, and Disraeli says the same in his description

of Monmouth's reaction to his meeting with the adult Coningsby at Coningsby Castle: "It would be exaggeration to say that Lord Monmouth's heart was touched; but his goodnature effervesced, and his fine taste was deeply gratified. He perceived in an instant such a relation might be a valuable adherent; an irresistible candidate for future elections: a brilliant tool to work out the Dukedom"¹². Ormsby does not talk of love in connection with Lord Monmouth, he says "live with"; Lord Monmouth has no heart, but he has "fine taste", and he looks on Coningsby as a "brilliant tool". In these respects Monmouth is like Lord Steyne, as he is in his liking for his companions "to be very rich or very poor; to be his equals. . .or to be his tools, and to amuse and serve him."¹³ Like Lord Steyne, he is capable of one emotion: anger and hatred: "The loss of Hellingsley was a bitter disappointment to Lord Monmouth; but the loss of it to such an adversary [Millbank Sr., between Lord Monmouth and whom there was a bitter personal feud] touched him to the quick."¹⁴ Also like Lord Steyne, Lord Monmouth is an arbitrary man, but it is in his arbitrariness that he differs from Steyne; for Steyne is quick to anger and then implacable while Monmouth can both hate and forgive arbitrarily. Monmouth rejects Coningsby with "callous dryness in his manner"¹⁵ when Coningsby tries to refuse to stand for the family nomination seat, but very soon Coningsby is back in favour when Monmouth relents, persuaded to do so by the request of the French actresses that he should have Coningsby dine with them. The famous example of his arbitrariness is the will which he left: this will, and its cruel effects, are modelled on Hertford's will. What should be noticed is that in the end Monmouth left everything to his bastard daughter Flora, the fruit of his

seduction of Stella; in the end he weakens, and he is governed by parental love. Disraeli offers the reader a glimpse of Monmouth in a weak moment, and these weak moments, few and far between, serve to highlight Lord Monmouth's wickedness and his ego-centrism. Possible Lord Monmouth's most revealing statement is made when he is at Eton for Montem, when he says "I would give Wellington's fame. . .if I had it, and my wealth, to be sixteen"¹⁶; the old roue regrets his youth and in so doing he implicitly compares his innocence as a youth with his present dissipation. The major difference between Lord Steyne and Lord Monmouth is that Steyne is all black, so to speak, while Monmouth is not; Steyne's evil is presented graphically and clearly, while Monmouth's evil is accentuated by the few glimpses Disraeli gives the reader of Monmouth's better side. Monmouth is a full-scale portrait of an evil man and Steyne is a sketch; the sketch is vivid, but the portrait is more impressive. As Donald J. Greene says in his article on Thackeray and Disraeli, Lord Steyne is "a brilliant suite drawn from Disraeli's 'Wicked Marquis' symphony".¹⁷

When we compare Lord Steyne and Lord Monmouth, we compare different treatments of character; but we can also compare Disraeli's treatment of setting and situation with that of two of his contemporaries, Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens, by comparing three of the more famous "Condition-of-England" novels, Sybil, Mary Barton, and Hard Times. Sybil (1845) was the earliest of these novels, Mary Barton (1848) was the second and Hard Times, published in volume form in 1854, was the third.

In Mary Barton Mrs. Gaskell was writing about the kind of people among whom she lived; her husband was a Unitarian minister in Manchester.

She was not an outsider, like Disraeli and Dickens; she knew the conditions of the people by long experience and not just by reading reports and by undertaking a quick tour. She tells us in her Preface to the edition of 1848 that she "had always felt deep sympathy with the care-worn men, . . . tossed to and fro by circumstances, apparently in even a greater degree than other men,"¹⁸ and the reader can see at once a difference from Disraeli; Disraeli would never have written "apparently". Mrs. Gaskell is not writing a polemic in Mary Barton as Disraeli is in Sybil; Mrs. Gaskell is more concerned with men and women than with systems, and she tries to be fair to both rich and poor, Chartist and repressory; she says, after listing the questions of the workers, culminating with the question "Why should [the worker] alone suffer from bad times?", "I know that this is not really the case; and I know what is the truth in such matters: but what I wish to impress is what the workman feels and thinks."¹⁹ In Sybil we learn what the workman feels or thinks almost completely through Egremont, that is, indirectly; in Mary Barton the protagonists are all proletarians, and we learn what they think from their own mouths and actions. There is much in Mary Barton that is also in Sybil, though A. W. Ward maintains in his introduction to the Knutsford edition of Mrs. Gaskell's work that Mrs. Gaskell had never read Disraeli, that the similarity arises from the fact that "the signs were there for all to see"²⁰. John Barton chews opium²¹ to prevent the pangs of hunger as Devilsdust was fed Godfrey's Cordial, Job Legh and Disraeli both feel that "when God gives a blessing to be enjoyed, He gives it with a duty to be done"²², and Mrs. Gaskell reiterates Nixon's view that strikes come from mutual lack of contact and confidence between

masters and men.²³ But Sybil is a novel about a social system and Disraeli's solution to the problems of the book is a socio-political one whereas Mary Barton is a novel about human beings living in that social system, and Mrs. Gaskell's solution to the questions raised by her book is a humanitarian one (Since Mary Barton appeared first in Household Words it would therefore have to accord to some extent with Dickens's own political and moral view). Old Mr. Carson and John Barton both turn to the Bible in their hour of extremity,²⁴ and the two men are reconciled in Christian awareness that men are brothers: "The eyes of John Barton grew dim with tears. Rich and poor, masters and men, were then brothers in the deep suffering of the heart."²⁵ Awareness of this essential brotherhood of men is the salvation of Carson and John Barton, making both more fully men, but such a solution does not apply directly to society but only to individuals. Mrs. Gaskell shows how the humanitarian solution helps individuals when it enables the younger people in the novel to escape to Canada, but although both Dickens and she herself thought it could change society she does not show how it could; nor does Dickens in Hard Times. Hard Times, like Sybil, is a polemic against a system; Dickens is attacking the Utilitarian system which Disraeli also had attacked, and he pits humanitarian love against Benthamism in this novel. Like Disraeli's and unlike Mrs. Gaskell's, his knowledge of the life of the poor in the new industrial towns is derivative, derived from reports, a short visit to Preston, and, of course, from Carlyle. This gives Hard Times some of the features of Sybil; the characters are more symbols than individuals, they derive their interest from their position in society and the way the "system" acts upon them. The principal characters are unreal--Sybil

and Stephen Blackpool are first and foremost representatives rather than people. The reader senses that Dickens and Disraeli are not writing about people but about things, abstractions which affect people profoundly but which are still abstractions. Disraeli attacks utilitarianism as part of his attack on capitalism; in Hard Times, the attack on utilitarianism, the attack on all-pervading fact,²⁶ is all-embracing. Coketown is in one respect nearer reality than Marney; it is dull, bleak, unrelieved, without the colour of the Temple of the Muses and men like Chaffing Jack and Dandy Mick except for Sleary's circus, and it is not a part of Coketown but is on its periphery. Hard Times lacks the colour of Sybil, but Dickens makes up for this in intensity, in the vigour with which he presents his moral, presented explicitly by Sleary: "There ith a love in the world, not all thelf-interethth after all, but thomething very different; t'other, that it hath away of calculating or not calculating."²⁷ Dickens has no time for politicians, because Parliaments and Members of Parliament are dominated by utilitarian self-interest and principles of "do-nothing", so he does not posit Disraeli's solution; nevertheless, both Hard Times and Sybil are novels with explicit morals, and in the expression of their social views they diverge from Mary Barton in that the abstract Condition-of-England question is not the centre of Mrs. Gaskell's vision. As far as the Condition-of-England question is concerned, Disraeli's solution is more immediate and political than Dickens's or Mrs. Gaskell's for he posits a social solution to a social question; they, on the other hand, perhaps mindful of Carlyle's invective about political Morrison's Pills and certainly convinced that all social problems have their meaning in the

fates and decisions of individuals, argue, like Carlyle, for moral conversion. Mary Barton is successful as a novel in the stimulation of concern with people rather than abstractions; Hard Times is great because Dickens has far more organizing intelligence than either of the two other novelists. For the reader, Sybil is a good preparation for reading the other two novels; in Sybil Disraeli gives us not only the case-histories but the political facts which are implicit in Mrs. Gaskell's description of people living under the conditions of Sybil, and both novels prepare the way for Hard Times, which has the moral of Mary Barton attached to the background of Sybil, the two imaginatively integrated by Dickens's superior art. Disraeli extended the scope of the novel in Sybil, Mrs. Gaskell wrote a conventional novel in the new genre, and Dickens added his own powerful use of symbol and form to Disraeli's genre to produce Hard Times, the greatest novel of the three, though all are interesting, and neither Sybil nor Mary Barton are insignificant.

Sybil is Disraeli's best novel, and although he is of secondary importance as a novelist, one must remember that a lot can be said for a good second-rater. John Holloway calls him "lively" and "versatile"²⁸, and this is true; his novels certainly have the liveliness of the picaresque form: all of his novels are full of happenings, "delightful, exhilarating operations of chance".²⁹ Indeed, there is too much colour in his works, and it is no wonder the anonymous reviewer of Tancred in the Edinburgh Review³⁰ betrays a weariness of Dukes in Disraeli's novels; too much "gracious living" can bore.

Disraeli is an optimistic novelist with an optimistic view of life,

as John Holloway shows, and even the flippant touches in his novels "help to control Disraeli's tone: and thereby they adjust both the general character of his work, and own sense of himself";³¹ they serve to emphasize his basic optimism. We have already seen how Leander's conception of his duty can emphasize Disraeli's message for the aristocracy, and one finds on reading Disraeli that light instances like this highlight the more serious parts of his work. Such interplay was not new; Fielding had written comic novels such as Joseph Andrews in which he presented serious criticism of society. Nor did Disraeli make any innovations in construction; his novels are conventionally picaresque, developing in a simple, straight-forward way with the help of chance occurrences to keep the plot moving. The things which make Disraeli's work in the Trilogy distinctive are his fascination with the special combination of high society, colour, pageantry and tradition, and his Judaism. All but the last of these stem from his romantic Tory outlook on the world. His style had changed markedly from the style of the Lucianic novels, Alroy and so forth, of his youth but did not distinguish him too much from his contemporaries. Its special charm comes from the way in which at erratic intervals in a novel he can suddenly write a few very well-phrased sentences. He can be witty very often, and at times there is so much irony interwoven with the serious parts of his novels that it produces ambiguity, the "uncertain twilight"³² of which Sir Leslie Stephen writes: "The texture of Disraeli's writings is so ingeniously shot with irony and serious sentiment that each tint may predominate by turns."³³ It can be difficult at times to know how seriously Disraeli is taking his own ideas; in Coningsby he satirises them through Sir Vavasour Firebrace

and his ideals of a regenerated baronetage and the ludicrous revival of the medieval Christmas at St. Genevieve.

More seriously, one wonders how sincere he was in criticizing the Tory and Whig Parties for their lack of principles when one remembers how he himself reacted to Sir Robert Peel's move to suspend the Corn Laws in 1846. The Tory government elected in 1841 had been elected on a Protectionist platform, but by 1845 the movement for repeal of the Corn Laws had become so strong that it was obvious that they would be repealed shortly. Peel was Prime Minister and rather than resign and let the Whig leader Lord John Russell repeal the Corn Laws he attempted to do so himself. Disraeli opposed Peel, and with the help of the remains of Young England he managed to wrest control of the Tory Party away from Peel, and thereby destroyed the government. Yet, as Peel himself pointed out in a debate in the House of Commons on 15 May 1846, Disraeli had formerly been willing and even eager to serve under Peel: as Peel said, it was "a little surprising that in the spring of 1841, after his long experience of my public career, he should have been prepared to give me his confidence."³⁴ Five short years later, on the night of 25 June 1846, "seventy protectionists followed Bentinck and Disraeli, and with the Whigs, the Radicals, and the Irishmen, they were more than sufficient"³⁵ to defeat Peel on the Irish Coercion Bill on the same night that the Corn Bill had finally passed; their majority was seventy three. There were a number of reasons for Peel's defeat; many Tories, 242 in February 1846, felt that to vote for repeal would be a betrayal of those who had elected them as protectionists. "Even Cobden thought it was wrong to ask the Protection Parliament to disregard its

pledges, and years after Peel's death still held that his conduct was difficult to defend."³⁶ To many it seemed that Peel was becoming too sympathetic to the outlook of the industrial advocates of laissez-faire. Some felt like Lord George Bentinck: "'I keep horses in three counties,' he said to a political opponent, 'and they tell me I shall save fifteen thousand a year by free trade. I don't care for that: what I cannot bear is being sold.'"³⁷ Had Disraeli felt like Bentinck, his conduct could easily be justified in the light of his subsequent desertion of the cause of protection, "the cause with which are associated principles the most popular, sentiments the most entirely national, the cause of labour, the cause of the people, the cause of England!"³⁸ The fact that Disraeli did abandon protection makes his treatment of Peel a nasty bit of dirty political in-fighting, but when one finds out Disraeli's reasons, implied in what he says of Peel, one cannot accept that Disraeli was merely acting in accord with what Myra Ferrars says at one point in Endymion: "a human being with a settled purpose must accomplish it, and. . .nothing can resist a will that will stake even existence for its fulfilment."³⁹ Disraeli was not staking his political existence merely to fulfil a desire for political power; he was afraid of the consequences of Peel's ministry. In 1845 he wrote to Lord John Manners from Paris, and the reference to Peel is obvious: "things must be done by parties, not by persons using parties as tools--especially men without imagination or any inspiring qualities, or who, rather, offer you duplicity instead of inspiration",⁴⁰ Peel was going back on his word to the electorate, offering "duplicity instead of inspiration"; worse, he was yielding to popular agitation, behaving as a concessionary

rather than as a Conservative,⁴¹ and this would encourage future movements of protest in the country and thereby detract from the power of Parliament. In his Life of Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography (1851) he passed this judgment on Peel: "No one ever strained the constitution so much. He was the unconscious parent of political agitation. . . .In a word, no one with all his conservative language more advanced revolution."⁴² Disraeli was right, and according to his political principles as presented in Coningsby he could not act otherwise than he did; he could have fought more cleanly against Peel, but his job was to destroy Peel's influence, and in this he succeeded. As a conservative he was in a dilemma, a conflict of loyalties--loyalty to one's leader, and loyalty to the traditions of Parliamentary government--and as a man with conservative principles the English constitution had to come before everything else; Disraeli and the Protectionists acted towards Peel in 1846 as Churchill and most of the Conservative Party acted towards Chamberlain in 1940. Disraeli's infidelity towards Peel was more than balanced by his fidelity to his own ideals.

Although Disraeli could act in ways which had very serious consequences, and write about very serious questions, in the end one must agree with John Holloway's assertion that "one novel after another bears witness, in its whole contour, to the view that life is colourful and kindly, and that the right ordering of it lies in an active and adaptable traditionalism";⁴³ this is obvious to any reader of his work despite the ambiguity that puzzled Sir Leslie Stephen and which caused V. S. Pritchett to write: "One can never be absolutely sure that Disraeli's imagination would distinguish between a great palace and a great Corner House."⁴⁴

Whatever the powers of his imagination, one cannot deny that it was fertile; it was erratic, undirected very often, not at all like Dickens's fertile and essentially controlled imagination, but it did exist.

Disraeli was a politician's novelist, a novelist whose "intellect feasts on polity",⁴⁵ and a novelist's politician who led a life almost as romantic as one of his heroes; whether one laments "the degradation of a promising novelist into a Prime Minister"⁴⁶ with Sir Leslie Stephen, or wonders with Disraeli's fellow Tories at a Prime Minister and political leader who wrote novels, whether one sympathizes with Bismarck's "Der alte Jude, der ist der Mann"⁴⁷ or with Carlyle's nasty description of Disraeli as "a superlative Hebrew Conjuror",⁴⁸ one must agree that Disraeli himself is an intriguing figure.

He was a man who, having written the "Coningsby Trilogy" could take to himself Contarini Fleming's wished-for obituary:

Yet if I am to be remembered, let me be remembered as one who, in a sad night of gloomy ignorance and savage bigotry was prescient of the morning-break of bright philosophy, as one who deeply sympathised with his fellow-men, and felt a proud and profound conviction of their perfectability; as one who devoted himself to the amelioration of his kind, by the destruction of error and the propagation of truth.⁴⁹

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Lothair, pp. viii - ix.
2. A. L. Woodward, The Oxford History of England, XIII, 77.
3. Andre Maurois, Disraeli, pp. 64 - 65.
4. Woodward, p. 92.
5. Woodward, p. 51: "A French critic once said of [Lord Liverpool] that, if he had been present on the first day of creation, he would have called out in panic, 'Mon Dieu, conservons le chaos!'"
6. Woodward, p. 35.
7. F. R. Leavis, ed. Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, p. 41.
8. Republic, IV, 422e. Quoted by G. H. Sabine A History of Political Theory, p. 16.
9. Friedrich Engels, Condition of the Working Classes of England, p. 132.
10. See David Thompson, Pelican History of England, VIII, 17.
11. Compare Sybil, Bk. III with Engels, pp. 182 - 183.
12. Engels, p. 160.
13. Engels, p. 107.
14. Engels, p. 149.
15. The Times, (12 October 1843): quoted by Engels, p. 32. The "most courtly precincts" are St. James's Park.
16. Sybil, p. 66.
17. Tancred, pp. 164- 165.
18. Woodward, p. 120.
19. The Chartists demanded: (1) Equal electoral areas, (2) Universal adult male suffrage, (3) Payment of M.P.'s, (4) The abolition of the property qualification for candidates for Parliament, (5) Voting by secret ballot, (6) Annual Parliaments. All but the last item are now theoretically in operation in Britain.

20. Thomas Carlyle, Chartism, p. 2.
21. This slogan is still the motto of the weekly newspaper of the Co-operative movement, Reynolds News.
22. Pelican History, VIII, 85.
23. Sybil, p. 125.
24. J. A. Froude, The Earl of Beaconsfield, p. 129.
25. Engels, p. 113.
26. Carlyle, Chartism, p. 41.
27. Woodward, p. 483.
28. Woodward, p. 496.
29. Sybil, p. 315.
30. Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism and on the Idea of a Patriot King: the Patriot King was written in 1738, and first published by Bolingbroke in 1749 though it had circulated earlier.
32. G. D. H. Cole, Politics and Literature, p. 90.
33. Edmund Burke, Reflections, p. 40.
34. Burke, Reflections, p. 69. This is an admirable sentiment, but all would agree with it: it all depends on one's definitions and prejudices whether the statement condones laissez-faire or lends support to the adherents of compulsory medical health insurance.
35. Burke, Reflections, p. 200.
36. Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, p. 22.
37. Burke, Reflections, p. 61.
38. See R. J. White, The Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, p. 222. "The entire tendency of the modern or Malthusian political economy is to denationalize. . . It would dig up the charcoal foundations of the temple of Ephesus to burn as fuel for a steam-engine."
39. Southey, Colloquies, I, 79. "In came calculation and out went feeling."
40. See Popanilla; Tancred, p. 379.
41. Monypenny and Buckle, I, 219: quoted from the Wycombe Sentinel for

30 Nov. 1832, a weekly paper issued gratis by Disraeli's political machine during the election.

42. Monypenny, I, 285. (Referred to subsequently as "Life").
43. See Sybil, pp. 251 - 255: cf. Pelican History, VIII, 53 - 54, the Times account of initiation into the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, founded by Robert Owen, from the evidence in the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.
44. R. J. White, p. 230.
45. Southey, Colloquies, II, 157.
46. Carlyle, Chartism, p. 58.
47. Life, II, 141.
48. Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, p. 218: Williams compares Disraeli with R. H. Tawney.
49. Carlyle, Chartism, pp. 49 - 50 and Shooting Niagara, p. 68.
50. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 88.
51. Burke, Reflections, p. 13. Burke is, however, attacking Dr. Price.
52. Ibid., p. 107.
53. Coleridge, The Statesman's Manual, p. 21.
54. Carlyle, Chartism, p. 80.
55. Such conceptions underlie Southey's Colloquies; indeed, the choice of More is significant.
56. Lothair, pp. 197 - 198: "Atheism may be consistent with fine taste. . . but ethics with atheism are impossible."
57. Burke, Reflections, p. 117.
58. Southey, Colloquies, II, 331.
59. R. J. White, p. 239.
60. Tancred, p. 124.
61. Ibid., p. 229.
62. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 90.

CHAPTER II

1. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 106.
2. Coningsby, p. vii.
3. Ibid., p. 103. The conversation takes place in 1834.
4. Monypenny and Buckle, Life, I, 216.
5. Coningsby, p. 86.
6. Ibid., p. 261.
7. Ibid., p. 408.
8. Ibid., p. 396. The "exhausted sugar colony" is Jamaica.
9. Ibid., p. 146.
10. Ibid., pp. 262 - 263.
11. Ibid., p. 263.
12. Southey, Colloquies, I, 254.
13. Coningsby, p. 152.
14. Stephen R. Graubard, Burke, Disraeli, Churchill, p. 118.
15. Coningsby, p. 265.
16. Life, II, 88. This is a naive suggestion, but Disraeli is dealing in black and white in Coningsby, not realistic half-tones.
17. Coningsby, p. 411.
18. Ibid., p. 352.
19. Pelican History of England, VIII, p. 23.
20. Coningsby, p. 359.
21. Ibid., p. viii.
22. See Lothair, pp. 197 - 198: "Atheism may be consistent with fine taste, and fine taste under certain circumstances may for a time regulate a polished society; but ethics with atheism are impossible; and without ethics no human order can be strong or permanent."

23. Coningsby, p. 356.
24. Ibid., p. 303
25. Disraeli, Vindication; quoted in Life, I, 315.
26. Alroy, p. 15.
27. Frances T. Russell, Satire in the Victorian Novel, p. 191.
28. Sir Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, II, 112.
29. J. A. Froude, The Earl of Beaconsfield, p. 215.
30. Sir Leslie Stephen, II, 107.
31. Lewis Apjohn, The Earl of Beaconsfield, p. 136.
32. Coningsby, p. 106.
33. Ibid., p. 65.
34. Ibid., p. 240.
35. Quoted in Life, I, 237.
36. Sir Leslie Stephen, II, 115.
37. Kathleen Tillotson, Novels of the Eighteen-Forties, pp. 122 - 123.
38. Arnold Kettle, 'The Early Victorian Social-Problem Novel', Pelican Guide to English Literature, VI, 176 - 177.
39. Stephen R. Graubard, Burke, Disraeli, Churchill, p. 117.
40. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 86.
41. Ibid., p. 110.

CHAPTER III

1. Monypenny and Buckle, Life, II, 247.
2. Coningsby, p. 69.
3. Pelican Guide to English Literature, VI, 174.
4. Engels is concerned primarily with the urban proletariat in his Condition of the Working Classes yet he allocates more space to the capitalist class than does Disraeli in Sybil.

5. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 5.
6. Ibid., p. 5.
7. Republic, Book IV, Sect. 422e.
8. Alroy, Ixion, etc., p. 354. The comparison of this aspect of The Infernal Marriage with the topic of Sybil is suggested by T. F. Russell, Satire in the Victorian Era, p. 198.
9. Sybil, pp. 76 - 77.
10. Engels, Condition of the Working Classes, p. 32.
11. Ibid., p. 132.
12. Coningsby, p. 238.
13. Sybil, p. 66.
14. Carlyle, Chartism, p. 31: "Half-a-million handloom weavers, working fifteen hours a-day, in perpetual inability to procure thereby enough of the coarsest food." Cf. Margaret Jennings's song "The Oldham Weaver" in Mary Barton, pp. 37 - 38.
15. Engels, p. 140.
16. Sybil, p. 124.
17. Carlyle, Past and Present, pp. 21 - 22.
18. Carlyle, Chartism, p. 24.
19. Engels, p. 144.
20. Quoted by Engels, p. 168.
21. Ibid., p. 105. Adults, such as John Barton, chewed opium to quell hunger pains (Mary Barton, p. 133). I have been unable to find how many lethal doses are represented by 13 hundredweight.
22. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 4.
23. Sybil, p. 182.
24. Essentially, the truck system was a cheap method of giving the employers the benefits which accrue from a company town; tommy-shops were a slightly more subtle form of the truck system. Cf. Engels, pp. 182 - 183.
25. Sybil, pp. 437 - 441.

26. Ibid., p. 125.
27. Ibid., pp. 192 - 193. Cf. Engels, p. 113.
28. Coningsby, pp. 169 - 170.
29. Life, II, 165.
30. Engels, p. 276.
31. Sybil, p. 24.
32. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 204.
33. Engels, p. 80.
34. Sybil, p. 76.
35. Ibid., p. 166.
36. Ibid., p. 3.
37. Tancred., p. 109.
38. Sybil, p. 295.
39. e.g. Carlyle, Shooting Niagara, p. 48.
40. Carlyle, Chartism, p. 57.
41. Sybil, p. 135.
42. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 204.
43. Robert Tressell, especially p. 138 and pp. 275 - 276.
44. Sybil, p. 66.
45. Ibid., p. 116
46. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 18.
47. Sybil, p. 116. Mick was not the only man to think the working class's only hope lay in a successful general strike; many Chartists, especially in the North, were all for a national strike. Later adherents of the idea include William Morris, the I.W.W., and all whose thought was in the tradition of anarcho-syndicalism.
48. Pelican History of England, VIII, pp. 53 - 54.

49. Sybil, p. 223.
50. Ibid., pp. 74 - 75.
51. See note 50 to Chapter I.
52. Burke, Reflections, p. 61.
53. Ibid., p. 200.
54. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 17.
55. Sybil, p. 159.
56. Ibid., p. 342.
57. Ibid., p. 64.
58. Ibid., p. 79.
59. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 28.
60. These attitudes of aristocratic and working class enmity towards the middle-class still exist.
61. Sybil, p. 139.
62. Ibid., p. 143.
63. Ibid., p. 484.
64. Sir Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, II, 123.
65. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, pp. 92 - 93.
66. Dickens also gives us a working-class view of cottage-visiting by retailing what the visited brickworker has to say to Mrs. Pardiggle: "I wants it done, and over. I wants an end of these liberties took with my place. I wants a end of being drawed like a badger. Now you're a-going to poll-pry and question according to custom--I know what you're a-going to be up to. Well! You haven't got no occasion to be up to it. I'll save you the trouble. Is my daughter a-washin? Yes, she is a-washin. Look at the water. Smell it! That's wot we drinks. How do you like it, and what do you think of gin, instead! An't my place dirty? Yes, it is dirty--it's nat'rally dirty, and it's nat'rally onwholesome; and we've had five dirty and onwholesome children, as is all dead infants, and so much the better for then, and for us besides." Bleak House, Ch. 8. He goes on like this, completely destroying the humbug.
67. Sybil's own words: Sybil, p. 354.
68. Ibid., p. 143.

69. It is not only those who wave the Red Flag and sing the "Internationale" who are revolutionaries, just as some who do these things are not revolutionaries.
70. Kathleen Tillotson, Novels of the Eighteen-Forties, pp. 122 - 123.
71. Sybil, p. 284.
72. Compare Sybil, pp. 325 - 326 and Life, II, 83 - 84.
73. Despite my respect for Raymond Williams as a critic, I feel there is no basis for his claim that the marriage is meant by Disraeli to symbolize the union which actually took place--the union of land and capital. He writes:
"Sybil, of course is only theoretically 'the daughter of the people'. The actual process of the book is the discovery that she is a dispossessed aristocrat, and the marriage bells ring, not over the achievement of One Nation, but over the uniting of the properties of Marny and Mowbray, one agricultural, the other industrial: a marriage symbolical, indeed, of the political development which was the actual issue. . . . it is significant of Disraeli's shrewdness that, through the device, he embodied what was to become an actual political event." (Culture and Society, p. 100.)
While I am conscious that one ought not to underestimate the powers of an artist, nor underestimate the complexity of his symbolism, such an interpretation lays too little weight on the consideration that when Disraeli has something to say he uses a romantic plot as a sort of "carrier frequency", so to speak, and Disraeli's romantic plots normally involve an extremely happy ending in which true love wins out and the hero, or hero and heroine, live happily ever after secure in the possession not only of each other but of an almost embarrassing amount of wealth. Whether or not the reader enjoys didactic art, he can feel safe in accepting the most obvious interpretation--it is a branch of literature where Occam's razor is a valuable critical technique.
74. Contarini Fleming, p. 339: the "metaphysical absurdities" referred to are laissez-faire, utilitarianism, Malthusianism, i.e. Liberal ideology.
75. Cf. Sybil, p. 451.
76. Life, II, 88.
77. Ibid., II, 16. Note that there is no mention here of the bourgeoisie.
78. Anonymous, "Article VI", Edinburgh Review LXXX, 524.
79. Evelyn Baring, Disraeli, p. 33.
80. Engels, p. 294 n.
81. Stephen R. Graubard, Burke, Disraeli, Churchill, p. 127.

82. Pelican Guide, VI, 176.
83. Stephen R. Graubard, p. 126.
84. Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, p. 97.
85. Life, III, 181.
86. Sybil, p. 107.
87. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 108.
88. Ibid., p. 107.
89. Pelican Guide, VI, 178.

CHAPTER IV

1. Disraeli deals with the attractions of the Roman Catholic Church in Lothair (1870).
2. Andre Maurois, Disraeli, p. 200.
3. Stephen R. Graubard, Burke, Disraeli, Churchill, p. 138.
4. Tancred, p. 38.
5. Ibid., p. 55.
6. Ibid., p. 49.
7. Coningsby, p. 356.
8. Tancred, p. 122.
9. J. A. Froude, The Earl of Beaconsfield, p. 129.
10. Tancred, p. 224.
11. Southey, Colloquies, II, 160.
12. Tancred, p. 165.
13. Ibid., p. 164.
14. Ibid., p. 171.
15. Ibid., p. 50.
16. Joule's law of the conservation of energy: i.e. the first law of thermodynamics, was presented first in 1843.

17. Tancred, p. 109.
18. J. A. Froude, The Earl of Beaconsfield, p. 177: quoting Disraeli's speech at an Oxford Diocesan Conference, 1864.
- 19., Tancred, p. 105.
20. Coningsby, p. viii.
21. Tancred, p. 122
22. Ibid., p. 121.
23. Ibid., p. 266. Burns suggests this influence of the Psalms of David in the Cotter's Saturday Night. Highland Protestants in Scotland still love the metrical Psalms, preferring them to the prose versions in the Old Testament.
24. See Tancred, p. 55: "the Most High"; p. 291: "Jehovah".
25. Tancred, p. 289.
26. Ibid., p. 291.
27. Ibid., p. 424.
28. "Tancred and Die Juden frage", Ed. Review, LXXXVI, 153.
29. Sir Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, II, 103.
30. Tancred, p. 229.
31. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 108n.
32. Coningsby, p. 249.
33. Ibid., p. 86.
34. Tancred, p. 202.
35. Ibid., p. 49.
36. Ibid., p. 367.
37. Ibid., p. 251.
38. Ibid., p. 207.
39. Ibid., p. 371 - 372.

40. Monypenny and Buckle, Life, I, 349. Hereafter referred to as "Life".
41. J. A. Froude, The Earl of Beaconsfield, p. 165.
42. Life, III, 11.
43. Sir Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, II, 118.
44. E. A. Baker, History of the English Novel, VII, 167.
45. Sir Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, II, 116.
46. For a full discussion of this matter, see Lionel Trilling, "On the Modern Element in Modern Literature," Partisan Review, XXVII (Jan. 1961), 9 - 35.
47. Tancred, p. 481.
48. For evidence of this gourmet's interest in cooking, see his letter to Sarah Disraeli of 2 August 1824 in Life, I, 44.
49. Life, III, 57.
50. Tancred, p. 291.
51. Ibid., p. 291.
52. Ibid., p. 54.

CHAPTER V

1. Lothair, p. viii.
2. E.g. J. A. Froude, The Earl of Beaconsfield, p. 215; Sir Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, II, 107,
3. Lewis Apjohn, Life of Lord Beaconsfield, p. 147.
4. Donald J. Greene, Nineteenth Century Fiction, XVI (September 1961), 157 - 164.
5. Thackeray, Vanity Fair, p. 412.
6. Ibid., pp. 412 - 413.
7. Ibid., p. 581.
8. Ibid., p. 710.
9. Coningsby, p. 187.

10. Ibid., p. 19.
11. Ibid., p. 392.
12. Ibid., p. 185.
13. Ibid., p. 26.
14. Ibid., p. 267.
15. Ibid., p. 412.
16. Ibid., p. 59.
17. Donald J. Greene, p. 163.
18. Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Barton, p. lxxix.
19. Ibid., p. 24.
20. Ibid., p. lvi.
21. Ibid., p. 133.
22. Ibid., p. 448.
23. Ibid., p. 198. Cf. Sybil, p. 166.
24. Ibid., pp. 429 - 431.
25. Ibid., p. 425.
26. Dickens, Hard Times, p. 20: "Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial." Cf, Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 125.
27. Ibid., p. 262.
28. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 86.
29. Ibid., p. 107.
30. Edinburgh Review, LXXXVI, (July 1847), 138 - 155.
31. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 105.
32. Sir Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, II, 115 - 116.
33. Ibid., II, 101.

34. Monypenny and Buckle, Life of Benjamin Disraeli, II, 389.
35. Ibid., II, 402.
36. Ibid., II, 344.
37. Ibid., II, 360.
38. Ibid., II, 387. From Disraeli's speech on the third reading of the Corn Bill, 15 May 1846.
39. Endymion, p. 118.
40. Life, II, 338. Letter of 17 December 1845.
41. Cf. Coningsby, p. 146.
42. Life, II, 307.
43. John Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 109.
44. V. S. Pritchett, The Living Novel, p. 73.
45. Ibid., p. 66.
46. Sir Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, II, 130.
47. Said at the Congress of Berlin, 1876.
48. Carlyle, Shooting Niagara, p. 11.
49. Contarini Fleming, p. 373.

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